Saturday Review

DECEMBER 1981 $1.50

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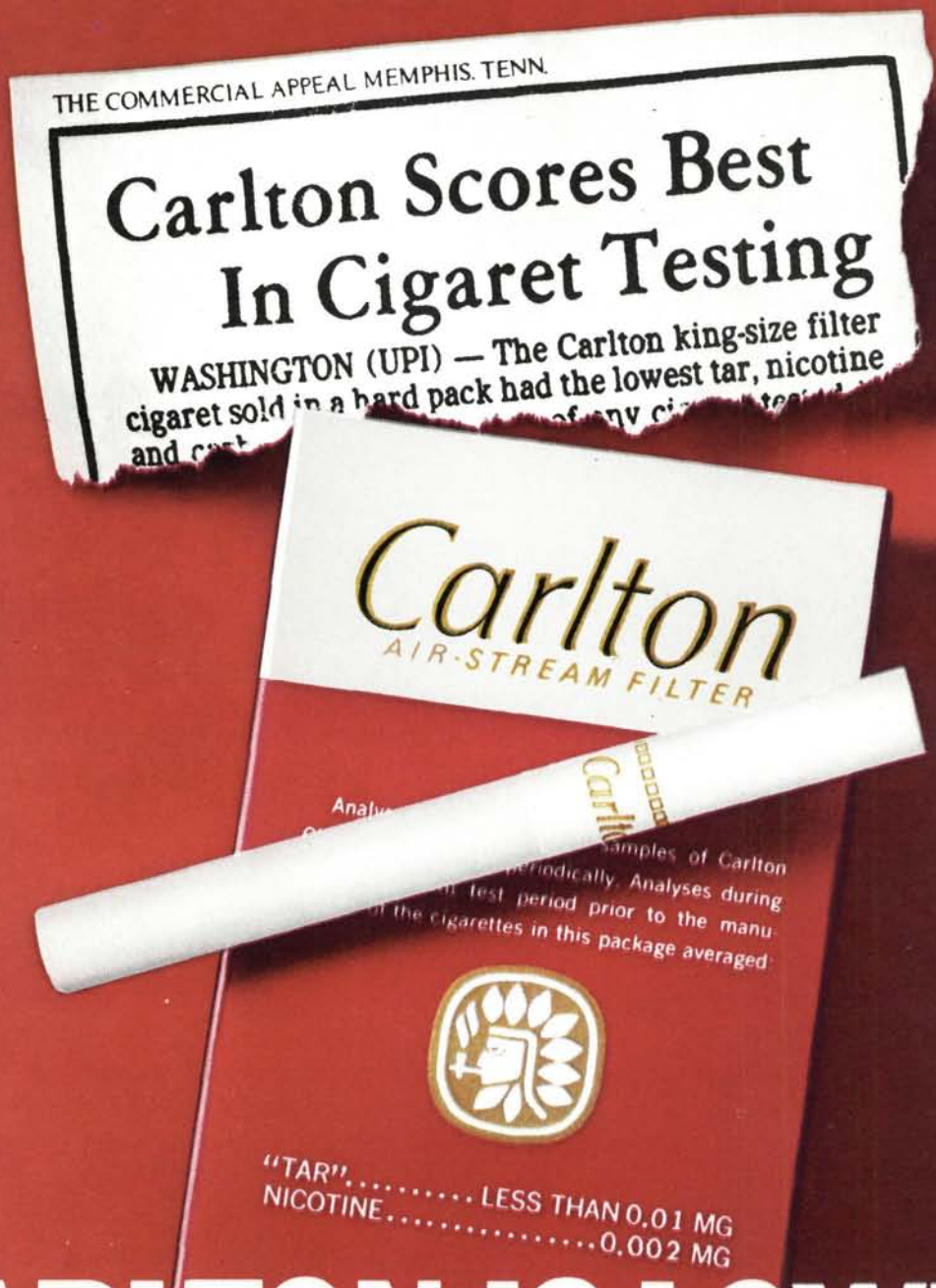
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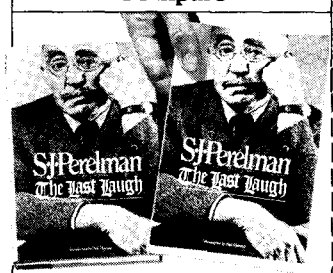

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Giving the marketplace a chance

On at least two previous occasions, Mobil published series of messages calling for a workable national energy policy. Following the 1973-74 oil embargo, we warned that America must come to grips with reality and stop taking energy, notably petroleum, for granted. In the second series, just before the Carter Administration unveiled the first of its two National Energy Plans, we exhorted the government to emphasize energy supply and economic common sense.

In neither instance did we suggest that such a policy be carved in granite. Rather, we hoped that government actions would be conducive to developing this country's vast energy resources at an accelerated pace. We noted that conservation alone will not solve our problems and that the marketplace is the nation's best hope for energy security.

Now America has such a policy. On July 15, the Reagan Administration issued its National Energy Policy Plan. Essentially, it expresses a philosophy with which we agree. This program sets no specific goals. It proposes no new regulations; in fact, it recommends that about half of the existing ones be "rescinded or modified." It doesn't even make predictions of future energy consumption and supply; instead, it states that uncertainty is the only certain thing about our energy future. Then, what does it do?

● It links energy policy directly to economic policy. In its description of the government's role, the plan points out that the same rate of energy consumption which can give us "a strong, productive, and secure society in the year 2000" could also give us "a weak economy, a less satisfied people, a huge bureaucracy, a damaged environment, and continuing apprehension about our position as the leader of the free world." In other words, it's not a question only of how much energy we consume. It's a matter of pursuing an economic policy calculated to stimulate productivity generally, giving people more control over the money they earn, and encouraging them to use it wisely. This road, the Administration thinks, leads to an economy that will produce more domestic energy and, at the same time, foster a sensible degree of conservation while preserving the environment.

● It enables people to "make free and fully informed choices." This is a broad concept, envisioning a "continuing national plebiscite" (the marketplace) to chart the nation's energy course. For instance, the policy statement does not say specifically that importing oil is bad under all circumstances. It merely shows how the nation can do better economically if increased domestic oil production, spurred by a free market price, squeezes out some imports. The policy statement is skeptical of any rules or standards by which utilities and industries must make a fuel switch from oil or natural gas to coal; their relative prices and availabilities will dictate a logical choice. The policy acknowledges that the price people are prepared to pay for domestic oil will determine how fast domestic oil is found and produced. For example, if domestic oil were still controlled at $18 a barrel, it would be uneconomic to produce some oil offshore or from wells requiring enhanced recovery—oil which might cost nearly twice that much to bring out of the ground.

● It restricts the government's role to where it's needed. The new policy adheres to the Administration's avowed plan to get government off the backs of people and business, but to be helpful wherever it's constructive. It envisions financial assistance to synfuels development only where the private sector alone can't hack it. It intends to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to its intended 750-million-barrel capacity by 1989, calling this preferable to mandated oil stockpiling by private-sector users against potential shortages. It intends to streamline the environmental permitting process for new energy ventures—coal mines, oil exploration, and the like—and still maintain "a reasonable balance between 'energy values' and 'environmental values'." Above all, the Administration is deeply concerned with the plight of the poor in the face of unaffordable heating costs, and aims to help them. However, here too, the policy statement sees the government's primary role to be improvement of social and economic conditions under its "economic program that is designed to help the poor, perhaps most of all." In other words, when the economy moves up, the poor move up.

We agree with the objectives of the policy statement and its principles, and we look forward to its implementation by Congress and the various government agencies. We seem, at long last, to have a workable energy policy.

Mobil®

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Saturday Review®
DECEMBER 1981

FEATURES

The Americanization of Milos Forman by Robert F. Moss
Ragtime's *Czech-born director captures the American idiom remarkably well* . . **14**

A Great Photographer's Love Story by Ben Lifson
André Kertesz's innovative new photos are a moving tribute to his wife . . **20**

David Hockney Reinvents Himself by Mark Steinbrink
His art is a constant revision of his past work—and of his identity **30**

Michael Bennett Tries To Do It Again by Scot Haller
The director of A Chorus Line *uses workshops to test "hot theater"*. . . . **38**

Catherine Malfitano: Opera's Rising Star by Stephen Wadsworth
The soprano's commitment to the drama *in opera resembles Callas's* . . . **52**

DEPARTMENTS

Letters **7**
The Insider **9**
December Spotlights **10**
Editorial by N.C. *Thoughts at Year's End* **12**
Language by Thomas H. Middleton *The Third Degree Exposed* **59**
Music by Irving Kolodin *An Extraordinary Debut* **61**
Theater by Stanley Kauffmann *Dickens Comes Home* **62**
Records by Stephen Wadsworth *'Tis the Season* **64**
Film by Judith Crist *Dazzling* Ragtime **66**
Books:
Alfred Kazin on Richard Winston's Thomas Mann: The Making of an Artist 1875-1911; *Eliot Fremont-Smith on Patricia Campbell Hearst's and Alvin Moscow's* Every Secret Thing: Patricia Campbell Hearst's Own Story **70**
The 20 Best Books of 1981 . . . . . **75**
Diversions *Double-Crostic, puzzles, etc.* **88**
SR Recommends *Worth seeing, worth doing, worth having* **91**

Page 20

Page 30

Cover: Photo by Bob Penn/Paramount Pictures *Page 52*

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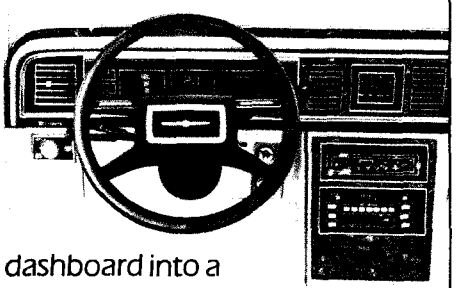
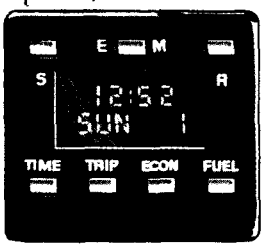


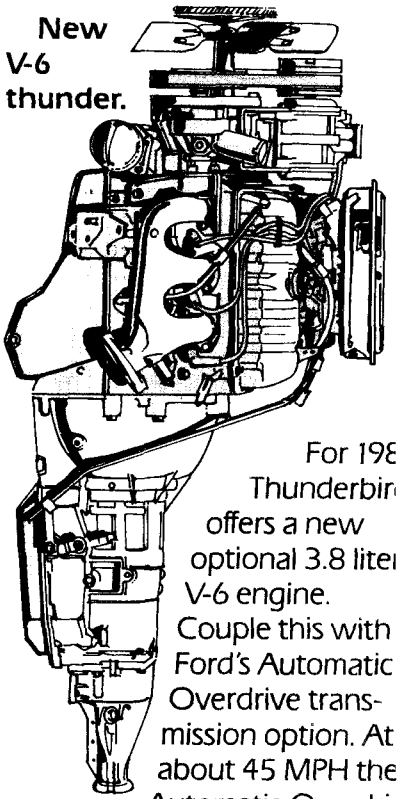
dashboard into a driver's information center. The Tripminder® computer option, new in Thunderbird,



displays time, elapsed trip time, trip average speed, current fuel economy, trip average fuel economy, total fuel used, and more. The optional electronic instrument cluster includes a digital speedometer and electronic "bar chart" fuel gauge.

And Ford's exclusive push-button keyless entry option allows locking and unlocking of Thunderbird's doors and decklid using your own special code.

New V-6 thunder.



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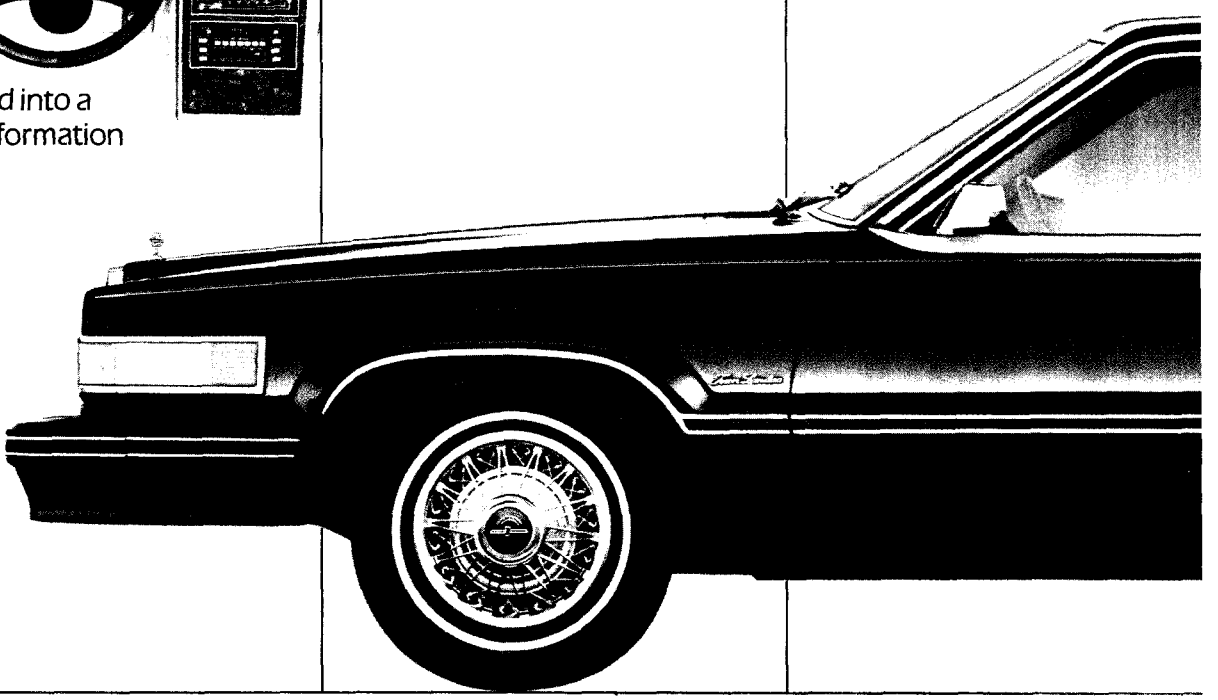

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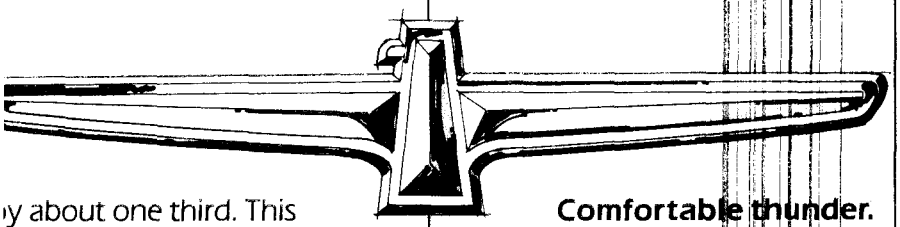

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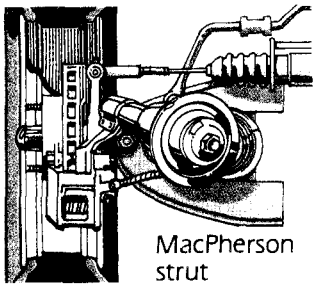

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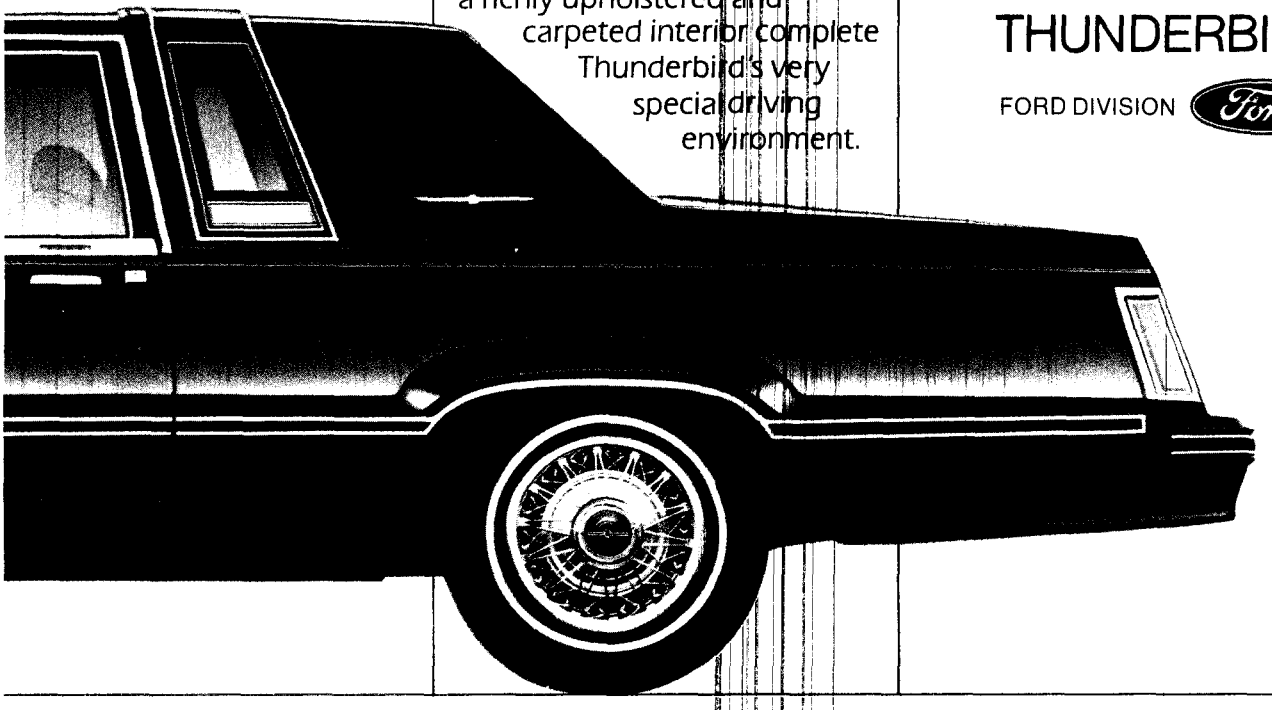
FORD DIVISION Ford



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Defending Cultural Cable

I was surprised by the tone of Peter Caranicas's article "Cable TV's Culture War" [October]. He bemoans the potential overcrowding of cultural programming on the cable systems and draws the hypothesis that after much jockeying for position, only a few will survive.

I would like to rebut this article by saying 1) that I would take bad Shakespeare over good *Dukes of Hazzard* anyday; 2) that the American viewing public is willing to pay for a wide variety of options; 3) that Mr. Caranicas underestimates the number of people willing to support an alternative to current network programming. It's true, broadcast performances are a poor second, but it's impractical to assume that the culture lover can attend as many live performances as he wishes. Cultural cable offerings are a positive contribution.

Judith Sherwood
San Jose, California

Where Credit Is Due

Your announcement that the Lenore Marshall/Saturday Review Poetry Prize has been awarded to Sterling A. Brown [October] for his *Collected Poems* fails to mention that the book was published by Harper & Row in the National Poetry Series. We take pride in having the work of this distinguished poet on our list.

Edward L. Burlingame
Vice President and Publisher
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Harper & Row
New York, New York

Mort Neumann's Spirit

Let me congratulate you for the article, "Mort Neumann's Prophetic Eye" [September] by Susan K. Reed. Not only were the depth and scope of the Neumann collection captured, but also his sensitivity and perception. I have heard him talk eloquently about his art, but I have never read anything about him that so perfectly portrayed all of his enthusiasm, spirit, and love for art. *Sanford Schwarz*
President, Sterling's Magazines, Inc.
New York, New York

Glass Walls a Prison Make

It is interesting to note that Hilton Kramer, in his review of Tom Wolfe's *From Bauhaus to Our House* [October], does not answer the one question of fundamental importance that he poses: "What is there to like in this monstrous display of glass walls and poured concrete?" If Mr. Kramer doubts that Wolfe's criticisms have validity, then he ought to take a tour of Houston, Texas. Here is a city that was completely rebuilt in the 1960s and 1970s, all of it with a "modernist" look. There is nothing exciting about the architecture of its skyscrapers. There is no artistry in its mammoth urban sprawl.

Kramer is right to criticize Wolfe for his "comic scapegoats." But he is wrong to applaud "modernism" for its "lofty attempt." Prisons with plush carpeting and air conditioning masquerading as office buildings are still prisons, even if the doors open at 5 PM.

Richard C. Green
Houston, Texas

Angry at Islam

I was quite disappointed in Robert R. Harris's review of V.S. Naipaul's book *Among the Believers* [October]. At least Mr. Naipaul presented the facts about how Muslims think of us and the rest of the world. After the Iranian revolution and the death of an innocent Saudi princess, it is impossible to be sympathetic toward Islam.

Harold and Carolyn Salvesen
North Highlands, California

Clarification Not Needed

Judith Crist should not be so impressed by the William Blake line "chariots of fire" as a movie title, nor wonder at the absence of an explanatory epigraph in "Olympic Valor" [September]. The domestic audience for the British film would recognize it immediately from Blake's poem "Jerusalem," which is also the text of one of the most traditional and familiar hymns in the English Church. Would an American producer feel bound to clarify a film title such as "Marching as to War"?

Coincidentally, this same poem/hymn was used as a motif in another famous British film about running, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. Nobody considered it a "lagniappe for the literate" in that movie, either.

John Augustine
Essexville, Maine

Correction: The photographs accompanying "Joe Hirshhorn's Legacy" [November] were taken by François Bota.

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EDITED BY SCOT HALLER

Warren Beatty's Big Gamble

Warren Beatty wants to be taken seriously, please. He is producing, directing, and starring in a weighty new film, *Reds*—a three-hour-and-47-minute biography of journalist-radical John Reed, who wrote *Ten Days That Shook the World*, considered the best first-hand account of the Russian Revolution. *Reds* represents Beatty's attempt to secure a reputation as an important filmmaker after working on such commercially successful fluff as *Heaven Can Wait* and *Shampoo*.

But the film has some Paramount executives nervous. They worry that the very subject of the Russian Revolution (and even the film's title) is out of sync with the current political climate. Moreover, the budget has ballooned to $32 million according to the studio (as much as $50 million according to other industry estimates). And Beatty has told Paramount that the finished film won't be delivered until three days before the scheduled December 4 opening, which has made advance publicity difficult. Beatty himself had worked 16-hour days to meet the delivery deadline, and friends say he became haggard and overweight.

The last director with costly serious intentions was Michael Cimino, whose $35-million western, *Heaven's Gate*, nearly ruined United Artists. Paramount executives insist *Reds* will succeed, citing the presence of such box-office stars as Diane Keaton and Jack Nicholson as well as Beatty. But since most films must return two-and-a-half times their costs to break even, *Reds* must earn at least $80 million before it is even out of the, er . . . red. —S.H.

Keaton and Beatty in *Reds*—his extravagant bid for stature.

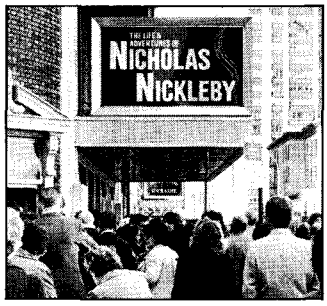
Gilder Charges Censorship

Is George Gilder the victim of feminist censorship? The best-selling author of *Wealth and Poverty* contends that complaints from feminists have kept several publishing companies from reissuing his controversial 1973 book, *Sexual Suicide*, an ardent critique of feminism. He alleges that Harper and Row, Basic Books, Simon & Schuster, and Times Books have bowed to pressure from their own women employees in choosing not to publish a new paperback edition. "Feminism is one of the real pieties of our time," says Gilder, "and when you violate pieties, you run into trouble."

Hugh van Dusen, head of Colophon, Harper and Row's paperback subsidiary, acknowledges turning down the book but dismisses charges of censorship. "People in women's studies circles hate *Sexual Suicide*. It's a red flag. Out of loyalty to those people, and to the integrity of our list, I decided not to bid for the rights. But that doesn't constitute censorship."

Jane Isaye, senior editor at Basic Books, says that her company's decision against *Sexual Suicide* was strictly procedural: Basic was not the original publisher and it only puts out soft-cover editions of its own books. She also denies censorship. "Just because he happened to hit it big with *Wealth and Poverty* doesn't mean that he's particularly convincing in *Sexual Suicide*."

Gilder's agent, Georges Borchardt, says, "No one is going to admit to a feminist conspiracy, but publishers saying it's controversial may be using a euphemism for something else. Usually publishers are delighted with controversy." —S.K.R.



$100 a seat—and sold out.

Was "Nickleby" Overpriced?

Broadway's most dramatic irony this season isn't on stage: it's the $100-a-ticket tariff for Charles Dickens's *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, an eight-and-a-half-hour condemnation of greed. The producers contend that huge expenses require the unprecedented prices and that any profit will be "marginal." It is costing $4.4 million to import and mount the Royal Shakespeare Company production for a 14-week run. But the show has become a box-office sell-out (ironically, with scalpers asking $225 per seat) and the producers stand to earn as much as $500,000. By corporate standards, that's a modest return, but it's a solid, unusually speedy profit on Broadway. (For Stanley Kauffmann's appraisal for the play, see page 62.)

As a result, some people are now claiming that the show is overpriced—in effect, turning the populist Dickens novel into an elitist event. Others worry that because the public is willing to pay $100 a ticket, *Nickleby* will pave the way for higher Broadway prices in general.

Three weeks after the opening, the producers did offer a lower-priced admission to student groups: $60 for the least popular all-day Wednesday performance. But that proved a sore point, too: It infuriated some theatergoers, students among them, who had already paid full price.

The producers are taking all this with good humor. Every ticket buyer receives a button that says, "I've been Nicked." —S.H.

MARTHA SWOPE ASSOCIATES/SUSAN COOK

A Hunch That May Backfire

Opera aficionados are casting wary eyes on the San Francisco Opera, whose innovative director of 28 years, Kurt Herbert Adler, is resigning this month. Adler brought international recognition to the company, which most observers feel now ranks second in the U.S. to New York's Metropolitan Opera. His successor, Terry McEwen, former head of London Records, is expected to take the company in much less adventurous directions.

McEwen is already reshaping Adler's organization. He has announced a year's sabbatical for one of the many auxiliary companies Adler established. And whereas Adler had a taste for exploring new repertory and for "homemade" singers who had risen through the ranks, McEwen is expected to favor stars who have recorded with him—one name prominently mentioned is Marilyn Horne—and to choose operas that suit a singer's preferences. McEwen is reportedly not fond of controversial director-designer Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, whose numerous idiosyncratic stagings have upset conservative audiences. And although Adler was willing to produce contemporary operas, McEwen is expected to do so only if they flatter voices.

McEwen (left) and Adler—now at odds.

ROBERT MESSICK

During the transition, tensions have developed between the pair, and neither man is willing to discuss the current situation. Ironically, it was Adler himself who picked McEwen as his successor two years ago. What prompted that choice? Adler says he made his decision on the basis of "a hunch." —K.T.

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DECEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

DANCE

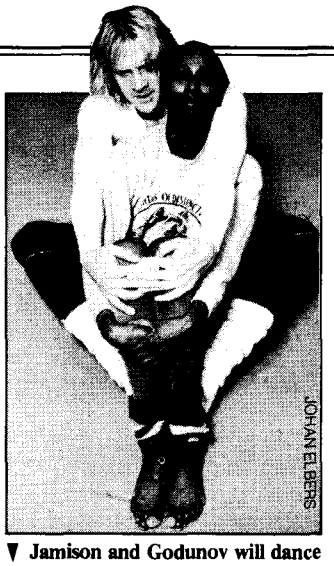
Instead of "The Nutcracker"

At last count, there were approximately 250 different productions of *The Nutcracker* in American dance repertories—from the New York City Ballet's justly famous extravaganza on down. To escape the ballet at Christmastime, dance aficionados in the U.S. pretty much have to stay home.

Except in Louisville, where the Louisville Ballet offers audiences a different Christmas package: Serge Prokofiev's **Cinderella!** (exclamation point, theirs). One of the country's top-ranking regional companies, the Louisville Ballet is directed by Alun Jones, who choreographed *Cinderella!* (with assistance from principal dancer Helen Starr) after the English version of the story, which has a sympathetic father character rather than a cruel stepmother. Jones also designed the costumes, and on stage he plays one of the ugly stepsisters. Special effects include an Art Deco magic garden, an opulent Edwardian ballroom, and a human clock that strikes the fateful midnight hour at the ball. Yes, the spirit is similar to that of *The Nutcracker*, but at least Louisville allows dance fans a chance to switch diets from sugar plums to pumpkins. (December 18 through January 2.)

▲ **Barbara LeGault as Cinderella with the Louisville Ballet.**

DAVID S. TALBOTT



JOHAN ELBERS

▼ **Jamison and Godunov will dance an Ailey pas de deux.**

Farewell to Jamison

When statuesque dancer Judith Jamison left the **Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater** last season to join the Broadway cast of *Sophisticated Ladies*, her admirers (who are legion) rushed to the Great White Way to see her, then looked to the day when she would return to Ailey's troupe. Now it appears that what Ailey took to be a leave of absence was actually a resignation; Jamison's future plans (so far undisclosed) lie elsewhere.

She will, however, have one last hurrah with the company that made her famous. Alvin Ailey has choreographed a pas de deux to jazz music by Keith Jarrett especially for Jamison and Russian defector Alexander Godunov (now a member of the American Ballet Theatre). The dance will be performed only once—at the Winter Benefit scheduled for the second night of the Ailey season at City Center in New York City. Jamison is on a one-night loan from *Sophisticated Ladies*, where her understudy will stand in. The Ailey-Jamison-Godunov collaboration is a first, and is a long-sought-after artistic liaison for all three.

Other than the *pièce d'occasion*, the Winter Benefit will include two repertory pieces, *Memoria* and *Revelations*, both by Ailey, plus a new work by Louis Johnson, *Fontessa and Friends*. (December 3.)

ART

Toys "R" Art

The Arkansas Art Center in Little Rock hosts the only competitive exhibition in the country of **Toys Designed by Artists**. Now on a national scale, the annual show takes place, appropriately enough, at Christmastime. What the contending artists sometimes lack in widespread renown, they make up for with imagination and inventiveness. Past prize-winning entries have included such flights of fancy as "Steam Powered U.F.O.," a bronze-and-brass saucer with whirling propellers (by Richard Prillaman of Memphis, Tennessee), and "Bear Bearing Ball, Ball Bearing Ring Toy," a finger ring with a bear that rolls around dizzily (by Barbara Walter of Stillwater, Oklahoma). "Pin the Brushstrokes on the Blue Boy" is an art lover's version of Pin the Tail on the Donkey (Jane Gregorius, Vail, Colorado), and "Shirley Temple, Black" is a curly-haired, dimpled doll—made of black wood (Annette McDougald Pate, Edmond, Oklahoma).

Why ask artists to design toys? Townsend Wolfe, director of the Arkansas Art Center, explains that the playthings appeal equally to senses of aesthetics and of humor. They also remind us that seasonal merriment need not be limited to Simon and Big Trak. (December 4 through January 3.)

▲ **"The Swamp" by David Bettinger, an Arkansas prizewinner.**

DeANN SHIELDS MARLEY

Eighteenth-Century Chic

Is fashion an art? The directors of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art think so, and they mount regular exhibitions in the museum's Costume Institute to prove it. This month, the institute will display clothes of the 18th century, most of which were originally worn by upper-class women of France. Some of the costumes are examples of fine period menswear, even though the title of the show—and its emphasis—is **The Eighteenth-Century Woman**.

The Met's position is that the design of clothing ultimately influences everything from the fine arts to politics and economics. With this exhibit, the museum has a valid point: The layers of billowing silks and brocades undeniably prompted the lower-class hostilities that led, finally, to revolution. That may or may not amount to art (what, after all were the designers trying to *say*?), but it is unquestionably history.

The dresses will be surrounded by fans, hats, shoes, jewelry, paintings, prints, and furniture from the era. Eighteenth-century music will chirp softly in the background. (December 16 through August 1982.)

◄ **An American society gown of yellow silk from the 1780s.**

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THEATER

A Jewish "Virginia Woolf"

Last summer, cartoonist Jules Feiffer's play **Grownups** opened at Harvard University's American Repertory Theatre. Critics called it a Jewish *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and declared that it succeeded where Arthur Miller's *The American Clock* and Woody Allen's *The Floating Light Bulb* had failed: It offered a convincing portrait of an American Jewish family. Feiffer insists his play is not autobiographical, that it "is more emotionally than factually true." Still, autobiography or not, critics found the play painfully accurate.

Unlike his inimitable cartooning, Feiffer's plays (*Little Murders*, *The White House Murder Case*, *Knock, Knock*) haven't invariably been well received. In fact, though *Grownups* was written in the early 1970s, prior to its success at Harvard, no Broadway producer wanted it. On Broadway, the play will star Bob Dishy, who has been described as "a Feiffer drawing made flesh." As he did at Harvard, Dishy will play Jake, a reporter for the *New York Times*. Jake's doting parents, who are always thrilled at his accomplishments but don't bother to read them, will be played by Harold Gould and Frances Sternhagen. (Premieres December 10.)

RICHARD FELDMAN

◄ **Bob Dishy with Cheryl Giannini as his wife in *Grownups*.**

Bancroft on Broadway

When playwright Tom Kempinski's two-character drama **Duet for One** opened last year in London, most critics applauded it—though many expressed serious reservations that the play was too close to fact for comfort: The plot concerns a violin virtuoso stricken with multiple sclerosis who must come to terms with the realization that she will never play again—the true story of cellist Jacqueline du Pré. Still, even those critics with misgivings agreed that the play's success hinged entirely on the heroine's virtuosity as an actress.

When *Duet for One* arrives on Broadway this month, the virtuoso in question will be Anne Bancroft. More than 20 years ago, Broadway pundits, after seeing Bancroft in *Two for the Seesaw* and *The Miracle Worker*, generally agreed that she was emerging as one of our finest actresses. Though she has usually been impressive since then (in such films as *The Pumpkin Eater*, *The Graduate*, and *The Turning Point*), she has occasionally chosen questionable vehicles (*Golda* on Broadway; *The Prisoner of Second Avenue* on film). And today, though her work is still widely respected, it is no longer considered a guarantee of satisfying theater.

In *Duet for One*, Swedish actor Max von Sydow will join Bancroft as the violinist's psychiatrist, and William Friedkin will make his Broadway directorial debut (he's best known for his films *The Exorcist* and *The French Connection*). These three artists have had their triumphs and disasters—but their combined forces suggest an event to anticipate. (Premieres December 17.)

FILM

George C. Scott, Headmaster

As an actor, George C. Scott has uncanny taste in his interpretations: His artistry is invariably passionate, unpredictable, and utterly convincing. But his taste is often wretched when it comes to choosing his films. He may have more bad movies to his (dis)credit than any other actor of his calibre: *The Savage Is Loose*, *The Hindenburg*, *The Changeling*, *The Formula*, etc., etc., etc.

Yet when Scott is in top form, there's not an actor in the U.S. who's better, and news of a new Scott project always carries with it the hope that *this* time he'll have picked a decent script. This month, the new Scott flick up for scrutiny is **Taps**, about a military academy where the students resort to gunplay when they learn the school is to be shut down. Scott portrays the headmaster—another in a series of military roles that began with Col. Bat Guano (in *Dr. Strangelove*) and peaked with Patton (in *Patton*).

Acting opposite Scott will be Timothy Hutton as the academy's top-ranking student, a cadet major so influenced by military ideals that he loses perspective upholding them. Hutton won an Academy Award for his excellent performance as the disturbed son in *Ordinary People*, his film debut. If nothing else, *Taps* appears certain to be impeccably acted. (Premieres December 18.)

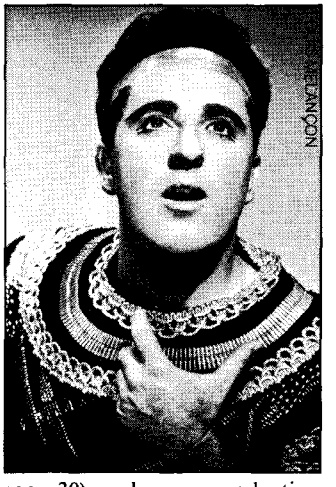
◄ **Timothy Hutton (left) and George C. Scott (center) in *Taps*.**

OPERA

Celebrating Bergonzi

Many arts organizations tend to go into hibernation as Yuletide distractions draw near. But New York's Metropolitan Opera will be more hectic this month than usual. In addition to its nightly bread-and-butter repertory and its annual holiday *Hansel and Gretel* performances, the Met will offer several noteworthy premieres—a Stravinsky triple bill designed by David Hockney (see page 30), and a new production of *La Bohème* staged by Franco Zeffirelli, in which Renata Scotto will sing Musetta, ceding her customary role of Mimì to Teresa Stratas.

▲ **Carlo Bergonzi as Radames in *Aida* in 1956—his Met debut.**



NONI DUNN

But probably the grandest night of the month will be December 4 when the Met will honor the 25th anniversary of tenor **Carlo Bergonzi**'s debut. Bergonzi, 57, hasn't sung much at the Met in recent seasons—though that will be rectified next year when he is scheduled to sing Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino*. At his gala this month, the legendary artist will celebrate by giving his 247th Met performance in an evening drawing on past triumphs: He will sing Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Act II (to Catherine Malfitano's Violetta, see page 52), and Cavaradossi in *Tosca*, Act III. In between, he'll get a break while Luciano Pavarotti, Teresa Zylis-Gara, and Louis Quilico sing *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Act III. Each portion of the grand celebration will be fully staged, and the conductor will be James Levine.

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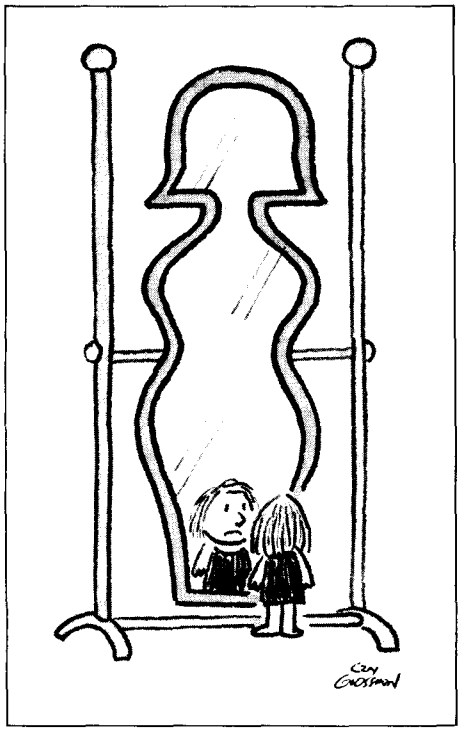
Thoughts at Year's End

What meaning is to be drawn from the events of 1981? It was, first of all, a year of sickening violence. The near-assassinations of a pope and an American president, followed by the murder of Anwar Sadat, underline once again the way history can be deflected or disfigured by men who want to kill. But the meaning of those events is not confined to personal tragedies or near-tragedies. Far more ominous than the ease with which individuals are exposed to assassination is the ease today with which civilization itself can be assassinated.

It is natural and necessary for people to be shocked by the ready availability of murderous weapons. Even more shocking is the ready availability of the weapons of holocaust and race suicide. But the greatest danger of all is represented by the widespread notion that the sheer accumulation of such weapons has anything to do with national security. By the end of this year the United States will own approximately 2,400 more nuclear explosives than it did at the beginning of the year, at a cost of billions of dollars. According to some estimates, the U.S. now has upwards of 35,000 of such explosives. Guesses about the size of the Soviet nuclear stockpile are not nearly so high but high enough. It is difficult to think of any military purpose that is being served by the accumulation. If only half the nuclear bombs from both countries were to be detonated, a large part of the earth could become uninhabitable. But the stockpiling continues, year in and year out, more a reflection of our infatuation with numbers than any real understanding of the requirements of national security.



Precise calculations about the destructive effects of a nuclear exchange are impossible. It *is* possible, however, to calculate the effects of the explosion of a single nuclear bomb on one city. Suppose a single one-megaton bomb were to be dropped on Chicago. The resultant death toll would be more than 200,000 people with at least three times that number needing urgent treatment for burns and radiation. What is Chicago's capability for coping with disasters? If every single surviving physician and nurse and paramedic within 50 miles of Chicago were to be mobilized, and every available hospital bed were to be utilized, the city's emergency capability would be exhausted with the first 5,000 patients. How would the ambulances and fire-fighting equipment get through the wreckage in the streets? After the firestorms subside, where do the people go? What do they do? How do they obtain food? These questions, of course, apply not just to Chicago but to every city in the United States.

Nothing in human history is more obscene than the cool discussions of competing nuclear strategies by apocalyptic game-players. All sorts of scenarios are being put forward about the circumstances under which we would drop bombs on the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union would drop bombs on us, as though both countries were involved in nothing more than a super backgammon game. The strategists in both countries need to be reminded that they are not playing with poker chips but with human lives and the whole of the human future.

A mammoth and deadly illiteracy has seized us. People listen to debates about the MX or other delivery systems without being told that, even after all these systems are completed, our capacity for intercepting or knocking down attacking missiles will still be close to zero. They still don't seem to know that the total defense of the United States and its people is being tied not to any workable military system but to a psychological theory. The government is betting the life of this society on the rational response of the enemy's leaders to the fact of our retaliatory capacity. It is assumed that the men who govern an enemy nation will not be caught up in a macho nuclear madness but will instead be so sensitive to the damage we can inflict on them that they will exercise total restraint in their own policy. It is not asked why, if statesmen can be intelligent enough to fear apocalyptic force, they are not intelligent enough to avoid stockpiling it beyond any conceivable rational use.

The ultimate insanity is represented by nuclear-tipped missiles being cozily ferried around on tracks while our cities and all our people are open and exposed. If the strategists want a scenario to end all scenarios, let them hypothesize a situation in which the silos survive in all their hardened splendor—a triumph that will go uncelebrated because the vulnerable humans are trapped in radioactive rubble.

At year's end, any inventory of our assets must begin with the understanding that the freedom and security of the American people, or any people for that matter, rests on the control of force and not the use of force. The time has come to stop throwing billions of dollars at problems and to start thinking about the genuine requirements of a world without war. —N.C.

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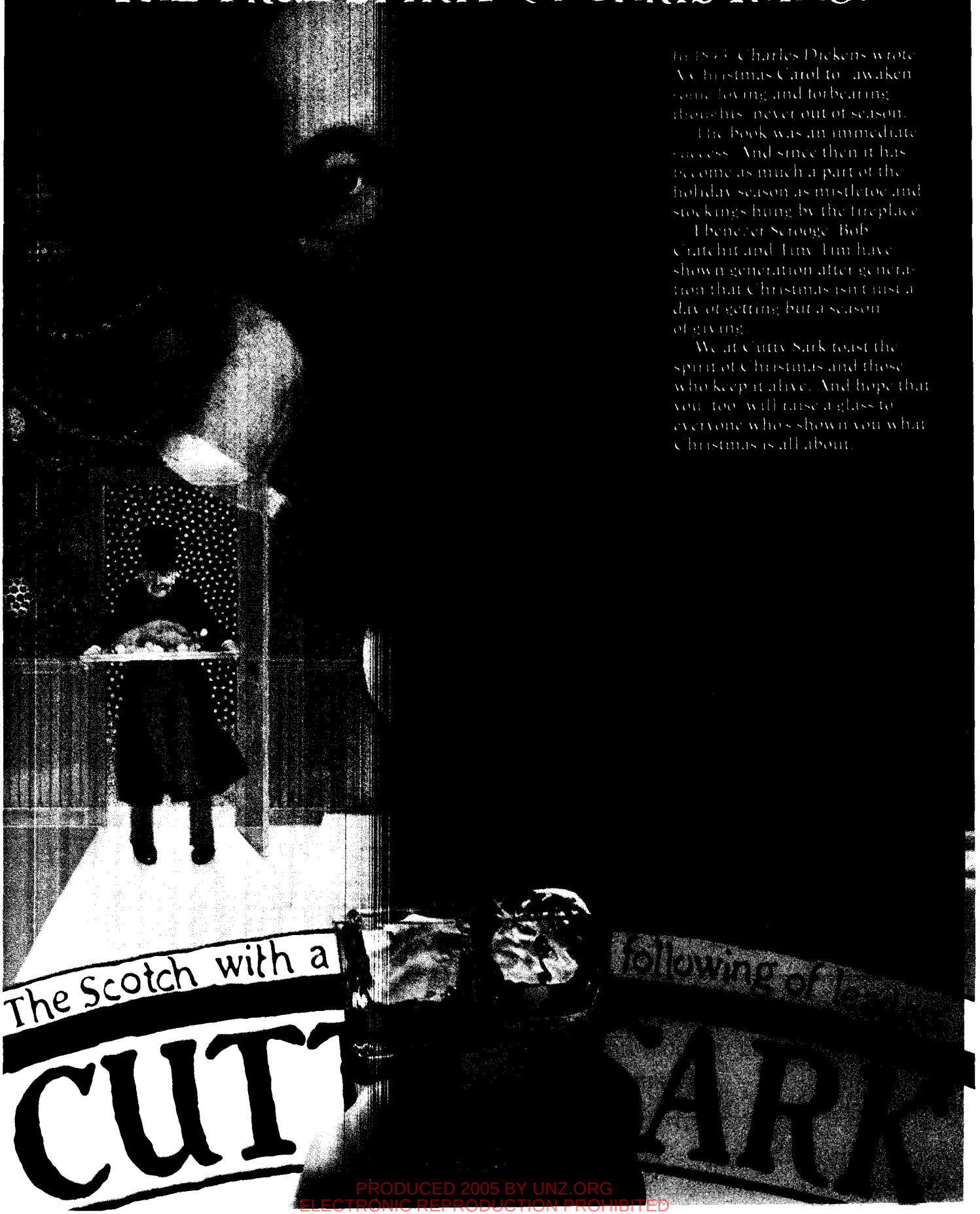
HERE'S TO THOSE WHO'VE TAUGHT US THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS.



In 1843 Charles Dickens wrote A Christmas Carol to "awaken some loving and forbearing thoughts that never out of season."

The book was an immediate success. And since then it has become as much a part of the holiday season as mistletoe and stockings hung by the fireplace.

Ebenezer Scrooge, Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim have shown generation after generation that Christmas isn't just a day of getting but a season of giving.

We at Cutty Sark toast the spirit of Christmas and those who keep it alive. And hope that you, too, will raise a glass to everyone who's shown you what Christmas is all about.

The Scotch with a following of le

CUTTY SARK

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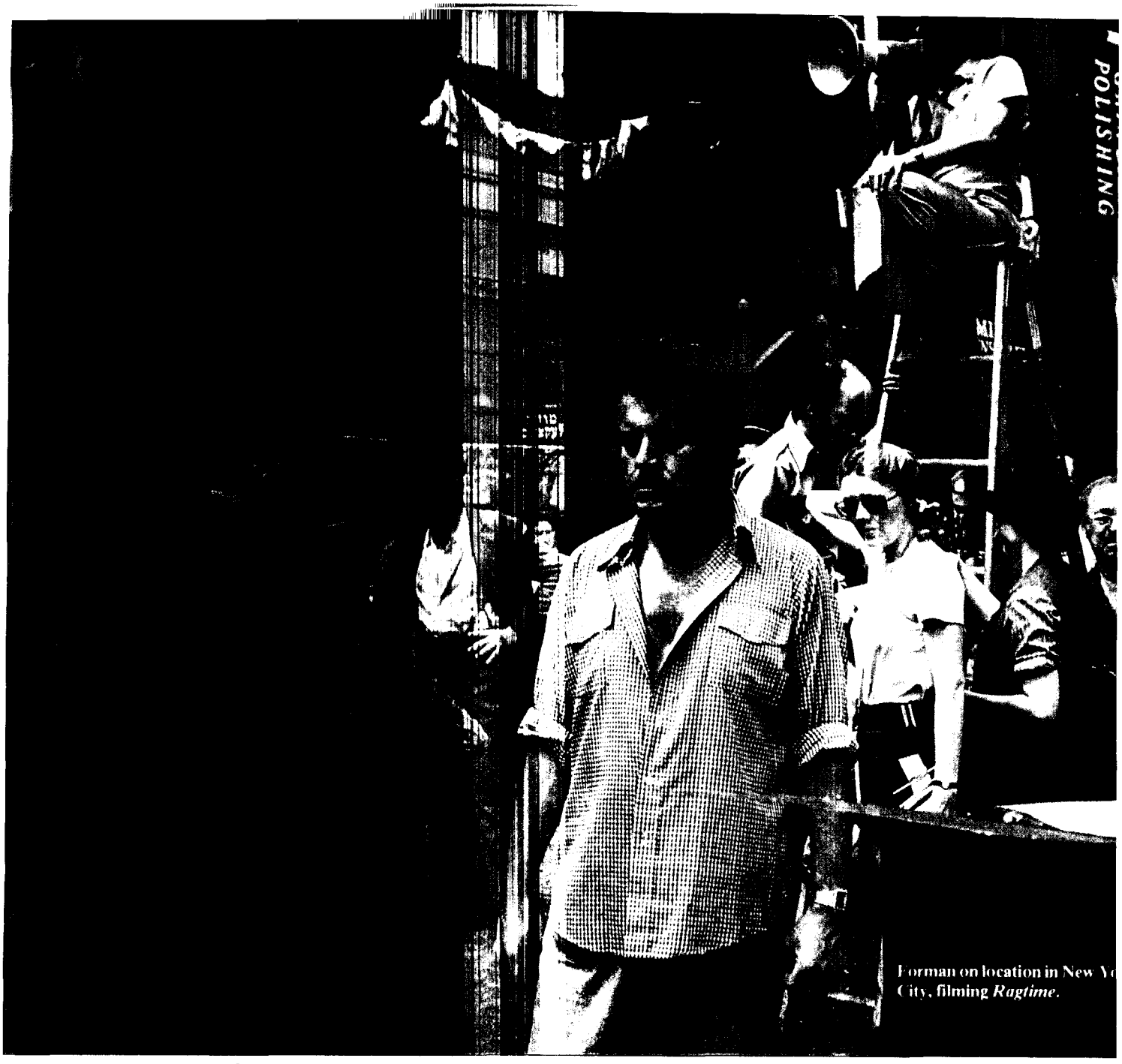

Forman on location in New Y
City, filming *Ragtime*.

The Americanization of Milos Forman

A Czech immigrant who couldn't speak much English when he arrived in 1968, Forman has become one of America's top directors. His movie of "Ragtime" opens this month.

BY ROBERT F. MOSS

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Take one," cries a production assistant, and the action begins. Harry Houdini pops out of a manhole to announce another miraculous escape. Evelyn Nesbit glides up the steps of the same jailhouse from which Houdini has just slipped away. A throng of reporters converges upon her, popping questions as she poses for photographers. A young businessman, infatuated with Nesbit, is jostled by the crowd. Through it all, Czech-born director Milos Forman remains motionless. He starts and stops his new film, the $32 million, turn-of-the-century world of *Ragtime*, with only two phrases: "All right, lez go" and "Cut!"

Opening nationwide this month, *Ragtime* is Forman's much-anticipated adaptation of E.L. Doctorow's hit novel. A vast mural of New York in the early 1900s, Doctorow's book intersperses historical figures such as Houdini, Nesbit, and Teddy Roosevelt with imagined characters, primarily a black piano player called Coalhouse Walker Jr. and an upper-middle-class family living in New Rochelle, New York, allegorically named Father, Mother, and Younger Brother. The publishing sensation of 1975, *Ragtime* received wide critical acclaim, best-seller status, and a $1.85-million paperback sale, catapulting its obscure writer up into the literary firmament.

For the screen, Forman has embellished Doctorow's spectacle by casting some unlikely modern-day celebrities as the personalities of an earlier era. The director coaxed 82-year-old James Cagney out of a 20-year retirement to play Police Commissioner Rheinlander Waldo (page 17). He staged a lavish musical number around Donald O'Connor, who appears as a vaudeville star. And, in a characteristically offbeat casting coup, he persuaded celebrated author Norman Mailer to play celebrated architect Stanford White. (The lover of young Evelyn Nesbit, White was shot dead by her husband on the roof of Madison Square Garden—an incident re-created for the film.) The involvement of such diverse talents has heightened interest in what has been a curious project from the outset. (For Judith Crist's review, see page 66.)

With its sprawling, interlocked narratives, intricate examination of social strata, and expansive historical setting, *Ragtime* would appear to defy screen adaptation. Indeed, after producer Dino De Laurentiis purchased screen rights for $500,000 his director, Robert Altman (*M*A*S*H**, *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*), decided that several movies should be made from the novel to do justice to its scope. When De Laurentiis disagreed, Altman and Doctorow attempted to buy back the property. Instead, De Laurentiis sought out Forman, who had just received extraordinary praise for his film version of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. After extensive wrangling with Doctorow over shaping the novel into a compact two-and-a-half-hour film, Forman and screenwriter Michael Weller created a dramatic spine for the story: It now concentrates on Coalhouse Walker Jr.'s vengeance for a racial affront and the Family's involvement with the black musician.

Forman has demonstrated a remarkable affinity for the complexities of American culture, considering that he could speak little English when he arrived in 1968. His 1975 adaptation of *Cuckoo's Nest*, Ken Kesey's cult novel, was a powerful look at life inside a mental institution. The movie snared Oscars for best picture, actor, actress, director, and adapted screenplay—the first such sweep since *It Happened One Night* in 1934. And with $102 million in worldwide rentals, *Cuckoo's Nest* became the highest-grossing film in the history of United Artists: Even *Rocky* couldn't overtake it. Four years later, Forman again showed that he possessed a special knack for transferring difficult, quintessentially American material to the screen when he filmed the rock musical *Hair*. In the film, Forman and Weller not only revitalized a theatrical relic, but also created a strong story line that the Broadway original lacked.

"There are a lot of suspicions about European directors here, and quite rightly," says Forman. "The studios ask, does he know the country well enough? Does he know the mentality? Does he speak the language?" By pursuing American themes with great success, Forman has escaped the fate of other European directors who have found that their continental popularity provides no passkey to Hollywood lots. "I know exactly what the problem is," says Forman. "So many foreign directors come here and wait and wait. And when nothing happens after three or four months, they get impatient and go home. But it's much easier for Roman Polanski and me to swallow the bitter beginning and go on because we have no place to go back to. We closed the doors." Forced into the American milieu, with the unique perspective of a stranger in a strange land, Forman has crafted films that explain to us our customs and heritage. And his perseverance has paid off: The sharp eye for detail, quirky sense of humor, and skill at adaptation have made him one of the best directors in his adopted land.

On the set of *Ragtime*, Forman possesses a demeanor so sober it's hard to remember that comedy is one of his fortes. Only an occasional smile dashes across his lips. At the age of 49, he is a burly six-footer with a large, ruggedly handsome face that escapes a look of stolidity through its one rakish feature: a perfectly cleft chin. His expressive brown eyes are hidden

Robert F. Moss, a contributing editor of *Saturday Review*, teaches English at Hunter College.

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behind a pair of amber-colored glasses.

Dressed casually in a jeans suit, a blue turtleneck sweater, and sneakers, Forman intently studies the action before him while he puffs on a fat black cigar. As the cameras roll, the actors perform admirably, hitting their marks and delivering their lines without a flub. Yet Forman orders take after take, occasionally bringing the action to a halt only a second after it has begun. Sometimes his eye has caught a pair of extras who have passed by too soon. Sometimes he has spotted an unnatural shadow and wants to correct the lighting. "If someone's little finger is out of place, he notices it," says actress Debbie Allen, who plays Walker's fiancée. Most often, Forman stops to do what his cast affectionately jokes about behind his back: engage in an intense Czech dialogue with cinematographer Miroslav Ondricek, a countryman who has shot all of Forman's films except *Cuckoo's Nest*.

When Forman sits down for an interview, he becomes studiously polite, a model of Mitteleuropa correctness. His voice has a deep, cavernous quality, and he answers questions in fluent but heavily accented English. Asked about his perfectionism, he responds, "People who don't try for the best irritate me. You have to try because if you just give up a little bit here and there where you think it doesn't matter, it comes out in a big slump in the end."

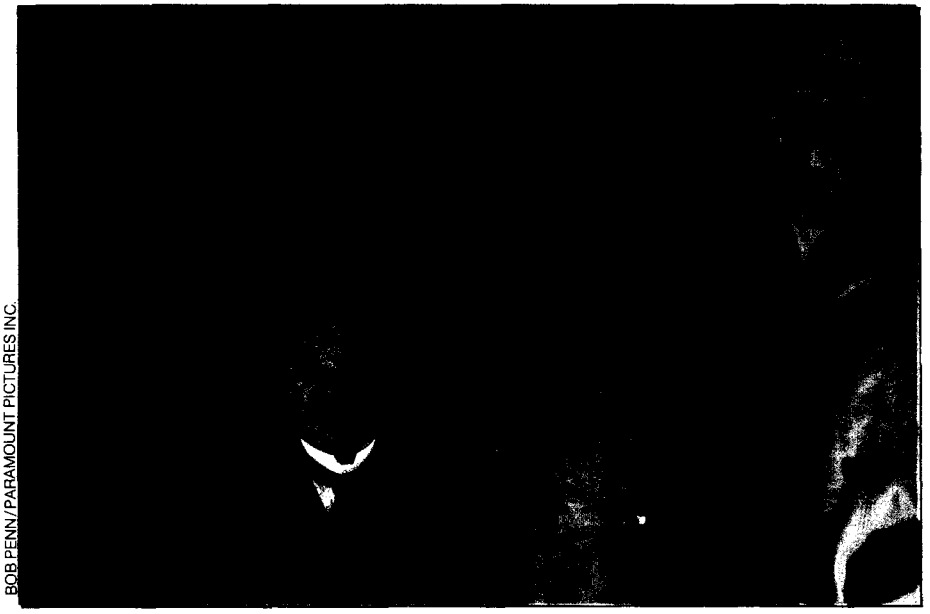
Consequently, Forman's films are assembled with the exactness of a man planning a commando raid. Casting is a particularly well-executed maneuver. "I interviewed over a thousand people for the parts in *Cuckoo's Nest*," he says. The huge cast of *Ragtime* brought an even larger caravan of hopefuls through his office. Unlike many Hollywood directors, Forman doesn't think only in terms of "bankable names" but rather fresh faces and suitable abilities. In *Cuckoo's Nest*, he shrewdly used a nonprofessional to play the asylum director. For *Ragtime*, he gave the pivotal role of Walker to an unknown, Howard Rollins, and seriously considered casting a writer as the Father. Indeed, both William Styron and J.P. Donleavy auditioned for the part, which ultimately went to character actor James Olson. Considering the accolades that Forman's actors have won, his much-praised skill with performers must be more than "a matter of good casting," as he contends. "He always gets the 'max' out of you," says Debbie Allen. "I was shooting one scene that was especially difficult, and he could tell that he had to get everybody out of the room. It was nothing that I asked for, but he was so in tune with me that he could tell if I just had a little more space, I could really sail. Suddenly he yelled, 'Clear the room,' and it was like the Force was in there with me."

Forman is not an introspective filmmaker prone to poking a flashlight about in his art. "I just don't analyze myself and my work in theoretical terms," he says. "This kind of self-analysis doesn't help. In fact, it makes me nervous."

Those who know Forman well claim that there is an amiable, even playful soul within the dour facade. Howard Rollins recalls a Forman vignette from the company's 10-week stay in London where the director shot most of the climax—a confrontation between the police and black radicals who are threatening to blow up J.P. Morgan's library. "I noticed that one of his sneakers was open and asked him about it," says Rollins, who, like other cast members, has worked up an endearing imitation of the director's distinctive accent. "He said, 'I have a corn and because of da pressure of da corn, I must wear it open till I see a doctor.' Well, not long after that, we went out to dinner at one of the finest restaurants in London, and do you know that man walked in with those Pumas on and one tongue hanging out and the other shoe tied? He was totally unconcerned. When I mentioned it to him, he even took the shoe off and held it up. 'My foot still hurts,' he said. 'Da corn is still there.'"

Fate has seen to it that Forman learn not only the art of film but the art of survival. Born into a middle-class home in Caslav, a small

MARY ELLEN MARK/LEE GROSS ASSOCIATES



BOB PENN/PARAMOUNT PICTURES INC.

Glimpses of *Ragtime*: Above, Forman directs author Norman Mailer who plays architect Stanford White. Below, James Olson, as Father, is surrounded by hooded terrorists.

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village north of Prague, in 1932, Forman lost both parents to the Nazi death camps when he was nine. Raised by relatives, he displayed a natural proclivity for the entertainment business, and, after a conventional secondary education, he entered the film division of the University of Prague. "With the distance of time," he says, "I consider the school there very good because it emphasized that in film, first there must be the idea, then the execution, and they must be on an equally high level."

Forman's own early work showed solid balance between the two. During the brief shining hour of the Eastern European cinema in the mid-1960s, Forman was one of several Czech directors—Ivan Passer, Jan Kadár, and Jiri Weiss—who suddenly captured the respect of the international film community. *Black Peter* (1963), his story of adolescence in a small Czech town, brought Forman wide recognition and a first trip to North America when the film was entered in the Montreal Film Festival. The comedy *Loves of a Blonde* (1966) was also a festival hit, bringing cheers from audiences in Cannes, Venice, and New York. An Academy Award nominee, it became the most profitable Czech film ever made. *The Fireman's Ball* (1968), a genial but hilarious drubbing of Czech firemen, was so effective that the whole 40,000-man force threatened to strike if the film were released, and the Czech president Antonin Novotny eventually banned it. When Russian troops entered Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and terminated the country's flirtation with artistic freedom, Forman happened to be in Paris. Deciding to remain in the West, he moved to New York's Greenwich Village and there began a long, excruciating process: the Americanization of Milos Forman.

The director quickly discovered that a European reputation, even bedecked with festival prizes, provides little collateral in the American movie business. Settling into an apartment on Leroy Street, Forman immersed himself in the

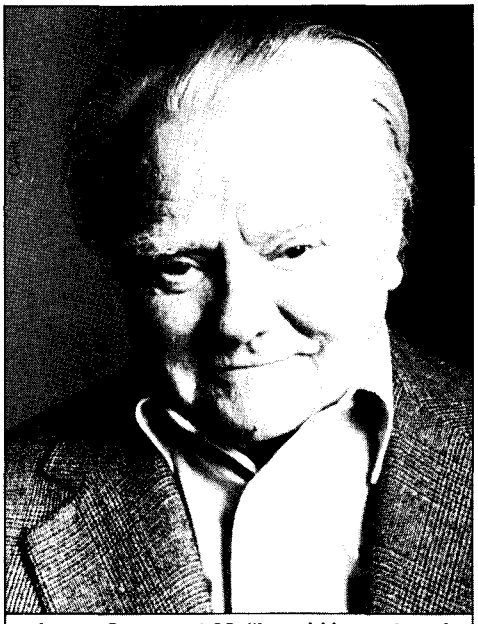
"I Always Wanted to Be a Farmer"

James Cagney isn't dancing anymore as he did in *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *The Seven Little Foys*. In fact, as New York Police Commissioner Rheinlander Waldo in Milos Forman's *Ragtime*, he doesn't move very much at all. At a bacchanalian banquet given by architect Stanford White he merely sits alert at the table. Commanding the police in front of J.P. Morgan's library, he stands still. Behind the red handlebar mustache and wire-rimmed glasses is an 82-year-old man who suffered a stroke three years ago and is now plagued by diabetes and sciatica. Yet when Rheinlander Waldo delivers his first lines, the unmistakable Cagney voice instantly recalls the peak performances of his spectacular 63-film career—from the lean, redheaded gangster who shoved a grapefruit in Mae Clarke's face in *The Public Enemy* to the tough captain in *Mr. Roberts*. One expects a menacing "you dirty rat" at any moment.

James Francis Cagney has spent most of his last 20 years living quietly on his 800-acre farm 80 miles north of New York City in the rolling hills of Dutchess County. He turned down a role in *My Fair Lady*, another in *Godfather II*. But Forman was able to prod Cagney out of retirement. Forman's house in western Connecticut is near the Cagney farm, and the two would see one another socially. "Milos first mentioned *Ragtime* as a joke," Cagney recalls. "But it was just the kind of joke that my wife and doctor had been waiting to hear. I could have stayed in my armchair and quietly faded away."

"I knew that his doctors had told him he ought to be more active," Forman once explained to a newspaper reporter. "So I used to say to him, 'When are you going back to work, James?' He would just be laughing. I showed him the *Ragtime* script and I told him I thought he would be just right for Waldo. 'If you decide to do it, you can still change your mind right up to the first day of shooting,' I told him. That way there was no pressure."

Cagney retired to his farm in 1960 after



James Cagney at 82: "I could have stayed in my armchair and quietly faded away."

finishing Billy Wilder's *One, Two, Three* in Munich. It is the farm that has been his abiding passion. "Acting was always second choice," he wrote in his autobiography. "I always wanted to be a farmer."

He shares the modest one-story stone farmhouse overlooking a serene six-acre lake with his wife of 59 years, Frances (whom Cagney calls "Bill"), and an efficient personal secretary, Marge Zimmerman, who takes charge of all the daily decisions. He breeds Morgan horses and prizewinning cattle, sails, and paints. He no longer rides, but he walks every day on the farm and swims in the small pool near the house. Every once in a while he ventures out. Last October, he went to New York to watch the Yankees in the World Series, throwing out the first ball of the second game.

Cagney's return to work was a celebrity event. Michael Weller, who wrote the screenplay for *Ragtime*, recalls being on location in Brooklyn: "There were some big New York City cops who were guarding him on the set. They had all brought their cameras, and they went up to him afterwards, a little sheepishly, and asked if they could take his picture. He was wonderfully gracious."

"When I went back on the set after 20 years, put on makeup, listened to the camera directions, it was as though I hadn't been away a single day," Cagney says. "But I never reckoned the excitement it would cause. I've never thought of myself as a celebrity, never a superstar."

"Watching Cagney's performance was remarkable," says Weller. "The guy knows how to conserve his energy perfectly. Sometimes when the camera started to roll he looked as if he didn't know what was going on, but the second he was supposed to say his lines he was right there." Adds Forman, "His instincts are unbelievable. As a director, I don't have to tell him a thing."

Both Forman and Weller were moved by Cagney's patience and generosity. "I knew he had sciatica," Forman recalls. "So I say to him, 'James, you must tell me if you are having any pain and then we stop.' But he works five, six hours at a stretch and he never complains."

The Cagney mystique impressed the younger actors on the set. Howard Rollins, who plays pianist-turned-anarchist Coalhouse Walker, was intimidated at first by the Cagney legend. "I used to hang around his trailer on the set," he says. "I had been thinking about my final scene and I wanted to talk to him. Finally I worked up the nerve, went into the trailer, and said, 'Mr. Cagney, I've never died before. You've died so many times, how do you do it?' He looked straight at me and said, 'You just die, that's all.'"

Cagney clearly enjoyed working with Forman. "*Ragtime* was easy," he says. "Milos was a wonder. We just turned it loose." **—Susan K. Reed**

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industry and in the folkways of his Village neighborhood. When Paramount Pictures invited him to develop a property, he started work on a story inspired by his local observations. After Paramount decided to abandon the project, Forman eventually persuaded Universal to make the movie. But more than two years elapsed between Forman's arrival here and the release of his first American feature. A breezy, improvisational social satire about a young woman who leaves suburbia for the East Village, *Taking Off* (1971) received critical bouquets but sputtered at the box office. Having deferred most of his salary, Forman was left destitute. "I couldn't afford my place," he reminisces. "I lived in the Chelsea Hotel, and frankly, I was only able to stay there because, for a year, the management didn't ask me for the rent."

His disheartening experience with *Taking Off*, following the pressures of mastering a new language and country, precipitated a near nervous breakdown. Depressed, he spent much of his time in bed, even though he was suffering from insomnia. Although Forman refused to see a psychiatrist, his childhood friend and fellow expatriate, Czech film director Ivan Passer, began visiting one as a surrogate for Forman. Passer described Forman's moods and behavior as his own, and then relayed the doctor's advice to his friend.

As part of his self-prescribed recovery program, Forman made a cross-country car trip, leisurely observing the culture between coasts. "The beauty of this land is just incredible," he says. In fact, Forman credits his subsequent surge of activity in part to his travels. He also contends that his fortunate assimilation results from time spent outside the gates of Hollywood.

Eventually, Hollywood came to Forman with an idea that suited his taste and talents. In 1974, actor Michael Douglas, who liked *Taking Off*, sent Forman a copy of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, which Douglas wanted to produce as a feature film. Although Kesey's novel was an underground classic, the studios had been resisting a screen treatment for years because, as one executive put it, "Who wants to see a movie about a bunch of loonies?" Forman decided he not only wanted to see it, he wanted to direct it. "Even with a good script and Jack Nicholson in the cast, no studio would finance the picture," Forman recollects. "When Sol Zaentz, the co-producer, told his company, Fantasy Records, that he wanted $4 million to make this film, they considered that he should be committed."

Like other Eastern European artists, Forman relished the opportunity to satirize burdensome bureaucracy similar to the oppression he had confronted at home. In *Cuckoo's Nest*, he subjected the asylum staff—the American equivalent of Czech firemen—to the deft comic knife-work of his foreign features. Indeed, his instinct for the humor in Kesey's bleak vision helped make the film palatable.

Ironically, Forman became an American success story by learning how to tell an American-style film story, a tale with tight narrative structure and clearly

Forman with actor Treat Williams in Central Park during the filming of *Hair*.

defined heroes and villains. Prior to *Cuckoo's Nest*, Forman had a preference for episodic plotting and an affably satiric perspective. But in *Cuckoo's Nest*, he anchored the drama to a series of carefully developed conflicts that led to a big-bang climax and a sad but inspiring dénouement.

The same proved true with *Hair*. An exhilarating, somewhat elegiac look at the counterculture, *Hair* secured Forman's reputation as a superb adapter of American material. With both *Cuckoo's Nest* and *Hair*, he took cherished works of the Woodstock generation and improved on the original by scaling the mythologized characters down to comparatively human proportions. Forman considers adaptation the logical purview of an outsider. "It's very hard to write original material in a country you weren't raised in," he says. "You have to have the culture in your blood." For his next project, Forman has chosen another unwieldy adaptation: a movie version of Peter Shaffer's highly theatrical drama, *Amadeus*.

Success definitely becomes Forman, who now dines at the best restaurants in the company of attractive women, and maintains two residences, an apartment on Central Park South in New York and a farm in Connecticut. He vacations vigorously between film assignments, skiing in Utah or exploring some part of the United States by car. "I am too restless to lie in the sun somewhere," he says. Married twice—each time to Czech actresses—Forman is separated from his second wife. Among the few subjects that make his voice quicken with emotion are his sons: twin boys of 17 who visit Forman in the summer. Their father's children, the boys recently bought an eight-millimeter camera and, he says, are "shooting film all over the place" in Czechoslovakia.

What can we expect from *Ragtime*? Forman disclaims any oracular gifts when it comes to his work. "I can't judge my films. I don't even like to talk about something I am working on, like *Ragtime*, because at ten o'clock I am very happy and at ten-thirty I am ready to throw it out the window. At eleven o'clock, I think it is the greatest movie ever made. At one o'clock, I fire the editor. At one-thirty, I hire him back." Still, as intelligently renovated by Weller and Forman, Doctorow's meandering plot is now a well-carpentered melodrama about a black man's revenge on the society that denies him even minimal justice. Forman has an affinity for works about quests for individual freedom, a legacy of his years under a Communist regime.

He has indisputably mastered the complex, syncopated rhythms of the film industry and of American life. In fact, the director who had to learn English when he arrived here now teaches film at Columbia University. America has accepted Milos Forman as an adopted son, bestowing rewards and trophies on him, and as a man and a filmmaker, he reciprocates that warmth. "Everyone has two countries," he says, "the one where he was born and America. Everywhere else, you are a foreigner and the movies you make are foreign too. Here you can have a home and your films can have a home." ■

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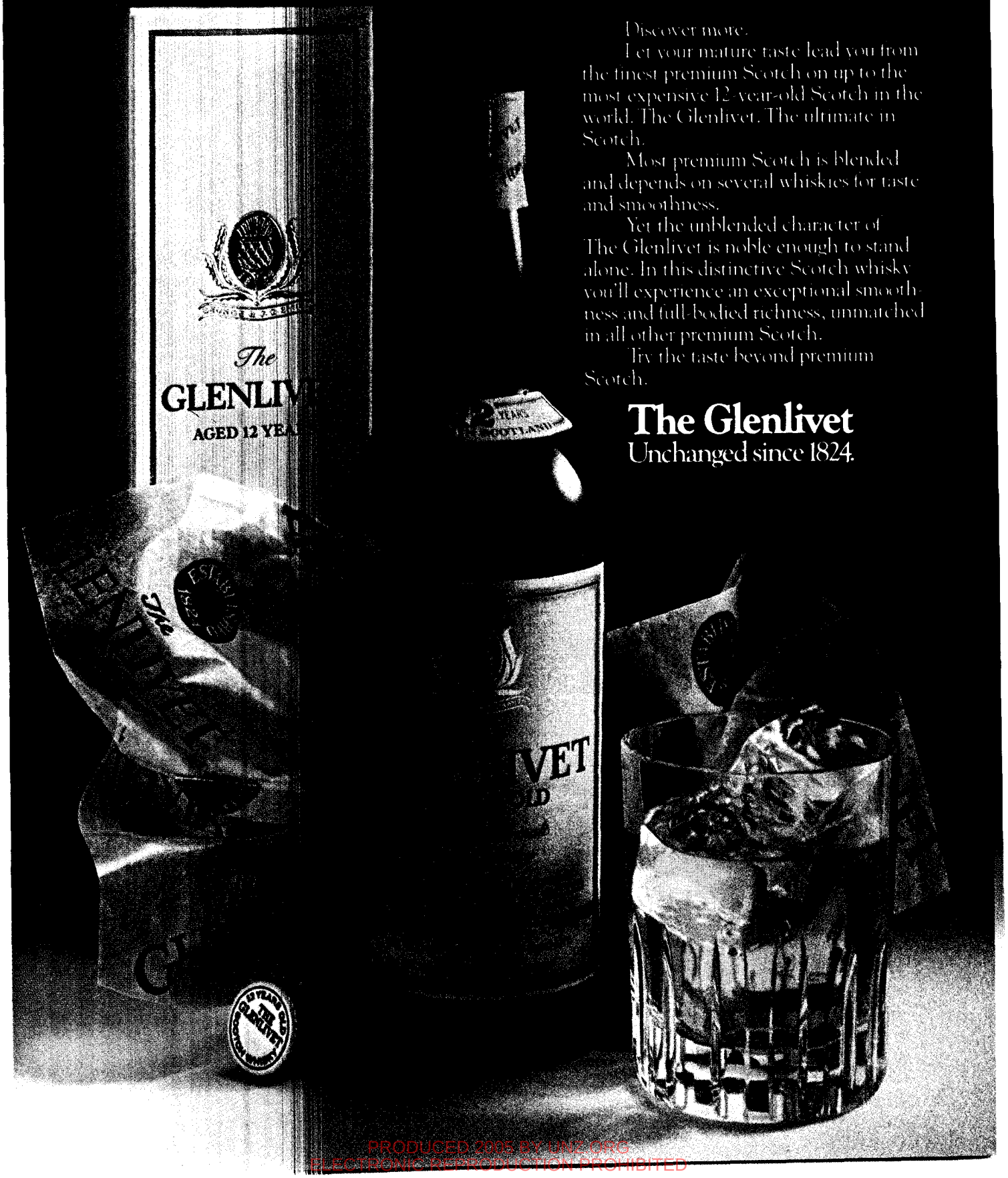

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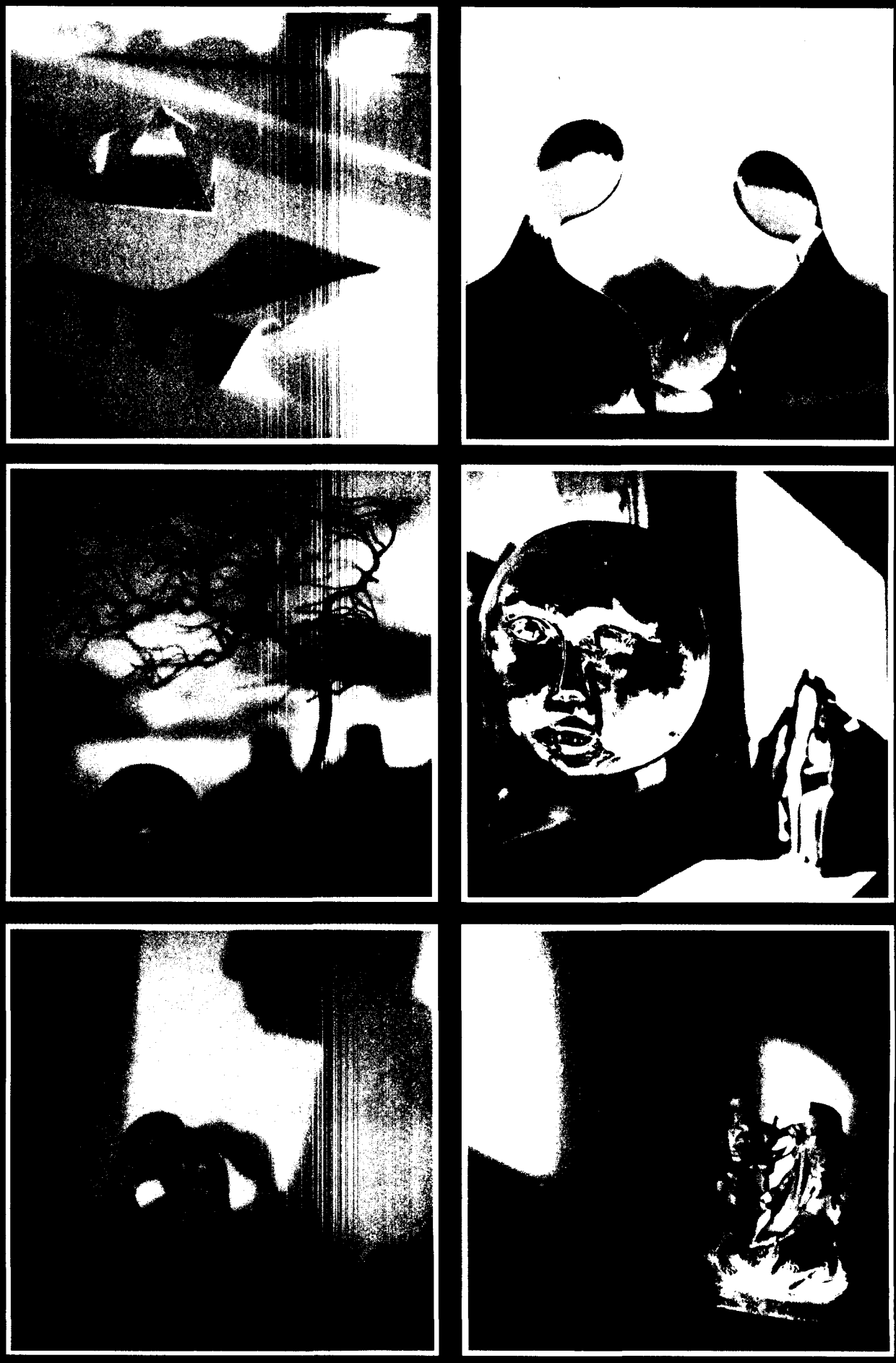

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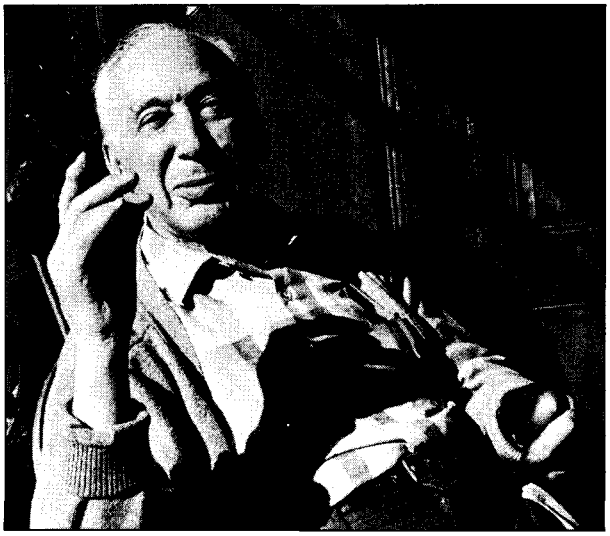
A Great Photographer's Love Story

Deeply upset by his wife's death, André Kertesz stopped taking pictures. Now he has worked out his grief in a stunning collection of Polaroid photos that are a tribute to his wife and his art.

BY BEN LIFSON

Photographers have rarely attempted the theme of bereavement, mourning, and the recovery of hope. This common mystery is more often the theme of poets and other artists whose media permit autobiography. Narrative has never been one of photography's strengths, even though photographers are bound to descriptions of the external world. But from the turmoil of grief, the great Hungarian-born photographer, André Kertesz, in his 86th year, has created a brief work in memory of his wife, a suite of 50 pictures with the lyric intensity and loose narrative structure of a sonnet sequence. The pictures have just been published by the New York Graphic Society in a book called *from my window* (distributed by Little, Brown and Co.), and they are scheduled for exhibition in Paris this month, and Chicago next spring.

Although modest in size, *from my window* is a unique achievement, one of the finest photography books in years. The graceful, delicate photographs are a series of still lifes that Kertesz constructed on or near his windowsill from the numerous glass objects he and his wife collected over more than 40 years—



SYLVIA PLACHY/ARCHIVE

Kertesz: From 35mm pioneer to Polaroid innovator.

At left, six of the photographs in *from my window*. The series of pictures, made of simple glass objects, enabled Kertesz to distance himself from personal sorrow and awaken new artistic impulses.

birds, hearts, spheres, shards, and the like. As such, they are a moving homage to the simple beauty of common things, a striking exploration of form, and a tribute to his wife. Even more remarkable, Kertesz shot the pictures with a Polaroid SX-70 camera. With the gentlest of ironies, Kertesz has photographed his "ordinary but beautiful" objects with a snapshot camera and expressed one of the most ordinary but profound events of the human heart: the course of a marriage and the death of a spouse.

Yet *from my window* is not simply a new performance from one of this century's greatest photographers. After his wife died in 1977, Kertesz gradually stopped working. This book, which began by chance shortly after he had resumed shooting, is the means by which Kertesz confronted memory, distanced himself from sorrow, and awakened within himself new artistic impulses. The book, in effect, served successfully as emotional catharsis.

It is also stunningly innovative. But innovation has always been an aspect of the genius that has brought Kertesz worldwide acclaim. When he bought his first camera in Budapest in 1912 at age 18, large-plate photography based on painting and print-making characterized serious work. Kertesz, however, imagined a purely photographic idiom devoted to direct observation of everyday life, and he used a small "amateur" camera in order to invent it. Later in Paris, realizing the potential of the new Leica 35mm, he shot random—and often touching and comic—street events to create a photography of poetic coincidence, informed by modernist tension, improvisation, and his fresh lyric sweetness. This revolutionary work is the source of the great 35mm tradition. At the same time, Kertesz pioneered European photojournalism and became one of its most widely published master stylists.

Kertesz's vision was, in large measure, sustained by the crucial support of the woman who became his wife. Their rela-

Ben Lifson, a lecturer in the history of photography at Yale University, is joining *Saturday Review* as a contributing editor.

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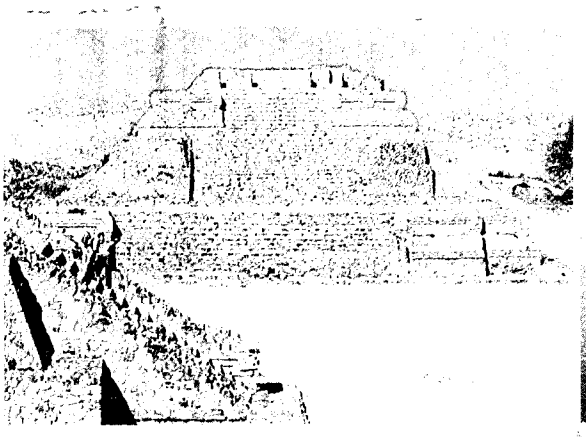
Folkloric Dancing.



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tionship began as a sentimental friendship in Budapest between an ambitious photographer of 24, frustrated by his job in the stock exchange, and Elizabeth Saly, a schoolgirl who worked afternoons in the same office. Today, in the apartment above New York City's Washington Square Park that they shared for 24 years, Kertesz speaks often of Elizabeth and of her special understanding of his art. "At that time I had only a few friends who understood what I was doing. It was completely new. And she—as a young girl—sees my work, feels, and accepts."

Their friendship deepened, then survived a long separation after Kertesz's departure for Paris. In 1933, renowned and successful throughout Europe as both artist and journalist, he sent for Elizabeth and they were married. In 1936, Kertesz accepted an offer from an American picture agency to work in New York for a year. But the agency was unscrupulous, and when Kertesz tried to become a freelancer, American photojournalism rejected him. One editor at *Life* magazine told him, "You talk too much with your pictures." By the time he and Elizabeth had saved enough to go back to Europe, World War II had erupted and they stayed in America. After years of struggle, Kertesz abandoned journalism and signed with Condé Nast Publications. For nearly 20 years thereafter he photographed interiors for *House and Garden*.

Elizabeth went into business, sacrificing her own interests in the arts. "You see these things?" Kertesz points to Elizabeth's paintings and drawings. "She was very talented. Dance—the same; singing—the same; piano—the same. But here in America it was impossible. She gave up." Yet her unstinting belief in Kertesz's art was vital because Kertesz's personal work was no better understood in America than his journalism. "She was also stronger than I, and more the realist," Kertesz recalls. Her worldliness insulated and thus sustained Kertesz's lyricism. He worked only sporadically on his own photography, yet many of his New York pictures are among his best.

In 1964 the couple felt secure enough for Kertesz to leave Condé Nast and devote himself fully to art. But he was then 70, constrained by declining strength and New York's increasingly dangerous streets. He photographed close to home, often shooting pictures of the city from his windows, as he had sometimes done in Paris. Eventually, belated recognition in America came in the form of exhibitions and honors.

In 1977, after a long illness, Elizabeth died and Kertesz was desolate. He tried to work, but his own health was poor. Vertigo often overwhelmed him, tremors in his hands forced him to rely on a tripod, and he soon stopped photographing altogether. To resume meant confronting his grief, and it was many months before he was ready to try. He began, slowly and painfully, by shooting again out of his window. But soon he started something new: On his windowsill Kertesz arranged some of the hundreds of statuettes and *objets-d'art* in his apartment, then photographed them as still lifes. With their Venuses, grotesques, *danses-macabres*, and hearts, these pictures are allegories of lost love. In all this work, there is a longing for the past, and sometimes even for death.

One day, on a stroll through Greenwich Village, Kertesz noticed a small, semi-abstract glass bust in a shop window. "I was very touched," he recalls. "The neck and shoulder...it was Elizabeth. I went in, and I looked and looked and decided: 'Don't buy.' I didn't want to see this always before me, you understand.

"I would begin shooting, shooting...no time to eat. Suddenly, I'm losing the sadness."

"But after three months... it was a horrible day: March, cold, nobody on the streets. I went over. I was alone in the store. And: 'May I help you?' 'Yes, I want this.' 'It's beautiful.' 'I know. I have been looking for a long time. I want to buy."

At home, Kertesz incorporated the bust into his little still lifes. "Around here there are many, many things, and I began using them. It was *our* conception, mine and Elizabeth's, *effectivement* our conception. Yet it is absolutely different from what you see before."

What had changed was the instrument; photographing the bust marks one of the rare times that Kertesz, the originator of the 35mm idiom, abandoned the 35mm camera. Instead he used the Polaroid SX-70, partly because he had one lying around (a gift from a collector of his work), and partly because of his compulsion to see the pictures immediately. The significant change is not the shift to color; his photographs with the SX-70 are, like his black-and-white pictures, expressed mostly in gradations of tone. What counted was the camera; with it Kertesz reawakened his pioneering spirit. There were problems to overcome using the Polaroid. "Nothing comes out the way you want. You take two pictures, and the blue is different each time, after one minute, after five minutes. You can't treat the film the way you want; it does exactly what *it* wants. If I open the lens a little more, everything is bad. And with this *ridicule* thing I tried expressing myself."

But Kertesz soon saw artistic opportunities in the SX-70's limitations. "It makes a sketch, you understand, a photo sketch, *photo croquis*. You make it in a moment, then try something different. Like an artist making a sketch for working." The sketchy definition of the SX-70 in part gives the pictures their visual delicacy; and the tentativeness of the sketch makes the pictures evocative.

With the glass bust, Kertesz's allegorical still lifes on the windowsill acquired a "human" heroine. The nature of the drama was unclear at the beginning, but Kertesz thrives on improvisation, which he calls "play," or "making variations." When he discovered a second, identical bust in another shop, for example, he immediately explored the formal and symbolic possibilities inherent in two figures. When this bust dropped and broke, Kertesz still found ways to use it. "I placed it upside down in this vase. And then this prism: I place it on top of the bust, giving an interesting impression, and *voilà*."

As this sophisticated play continued, its meanings began to emerge. First, there was the resemblance between Elizabeth and the bust. Then, too, most of the objects in the still lifes were deeply connected to Elizabeth as things she and André had collected together. Moreover, from the beginning of their relationship, *objets-d'art* had served as tokens of their affection. The first gift André gave Elizabeth was a small engraving of a street scene in Budapest; the first gift Elizabeth sent him in Paris was a piece of needlework she made after the engraving. "And look, the hearts. The nickname of Elizabeth, in Hungarian, this means 'little heart.' I found hearts, I bought hearts, many hearts, glass, metal, any way you want." Gradually Kertesz understood that his series of photographs could symbolically evoke the emotional truth of his marriage.

"I began shooting slowly, slowly, slowly, but soon, going crazy. I worked mornings and late afternoons. With morning light the sky is nice, and in late afternoon, full of variation. I would come out in the morning and begin shooting, shooting, shooting; no time to eat. I discover the time has gone, and no

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breakfast. The same in the afternoon.... I forget my medicine. Suddenly, I'm losing myself, losing pain, losing hunger, and, yes, losing the sadness."

Thus Kertesz turned his sorrow into the subject of his art and distanced himself from it. And ultimately, this distance let him form the individual moments of memory into the beautiful structure of *from my window*.

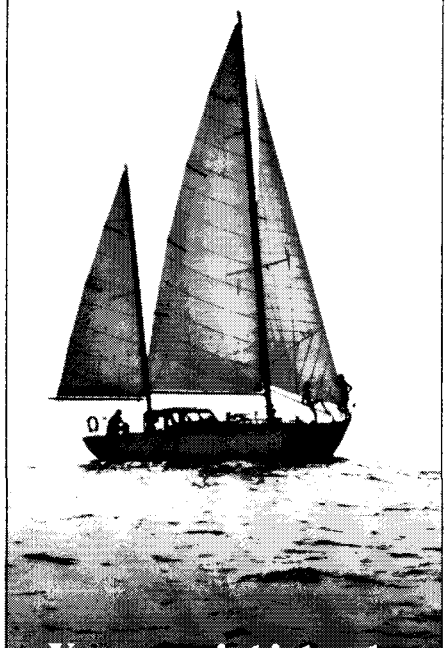
We first see the bust from deep within a room, a tiny charming figure among many objects on a windowsill, seen against the competing beauty of the world outside. Soon she is garlanded like a May Queen. Then we see only her shadow, which covers a wall as a loved one's image governs a lover's imagination. Yet a shadow can also have somber meaning, and shortly after this picture the bust appears on top of an hourglass as a witty evocation of feminine beauty contending with an older tragic symbol.

When the second bust appears, the two figures court and join. Soon they bend affectionately over a small ceramic bird. Then they disappear from the windowsill, and a large and clearly masculine face appears instead, its features tightened in grief and rage.

Here the narrative dissolves into digressions that, on the one hand, protect the book against the banalities of the photo-story and, on the other hand, open it to the free associations of reverie. Glass birds chirp to the sunrise, and a glass rooster crows against sunset and storm. The busts reappear, sometimes severed by a heavy shard of glass. A single bust beckons to its reflection in a broken mirror. Soon the bust is both male and female, and in the long final sequence it is alone on the windowsill as night gathers. Yet throughout the book there appear nonallegorical still lifes, reminders that the world's beauty persists. At the end of the book the bust is once more seen against the dawn.

Many of the photographs, both with and without the busts, refer directly to the still lifes and self-portraits Kertesz made in Paris, and to his great series of distorted nudes of 1933. Other pictures are informed by the wit—gentle in Budapest, buoyant in Paris, mordant in New York—that characterizes Kertesz's best work. Even the size of the pictures and the modest format of the book express his enduring love for small forms. Thus *from my window* is a double homage: to the art that enabled Kertesz to rescue the emotional truth of his marriage from oblivion, and to the love that even as a memory had so much to do with the life of that art. ■

THE CAYMANS



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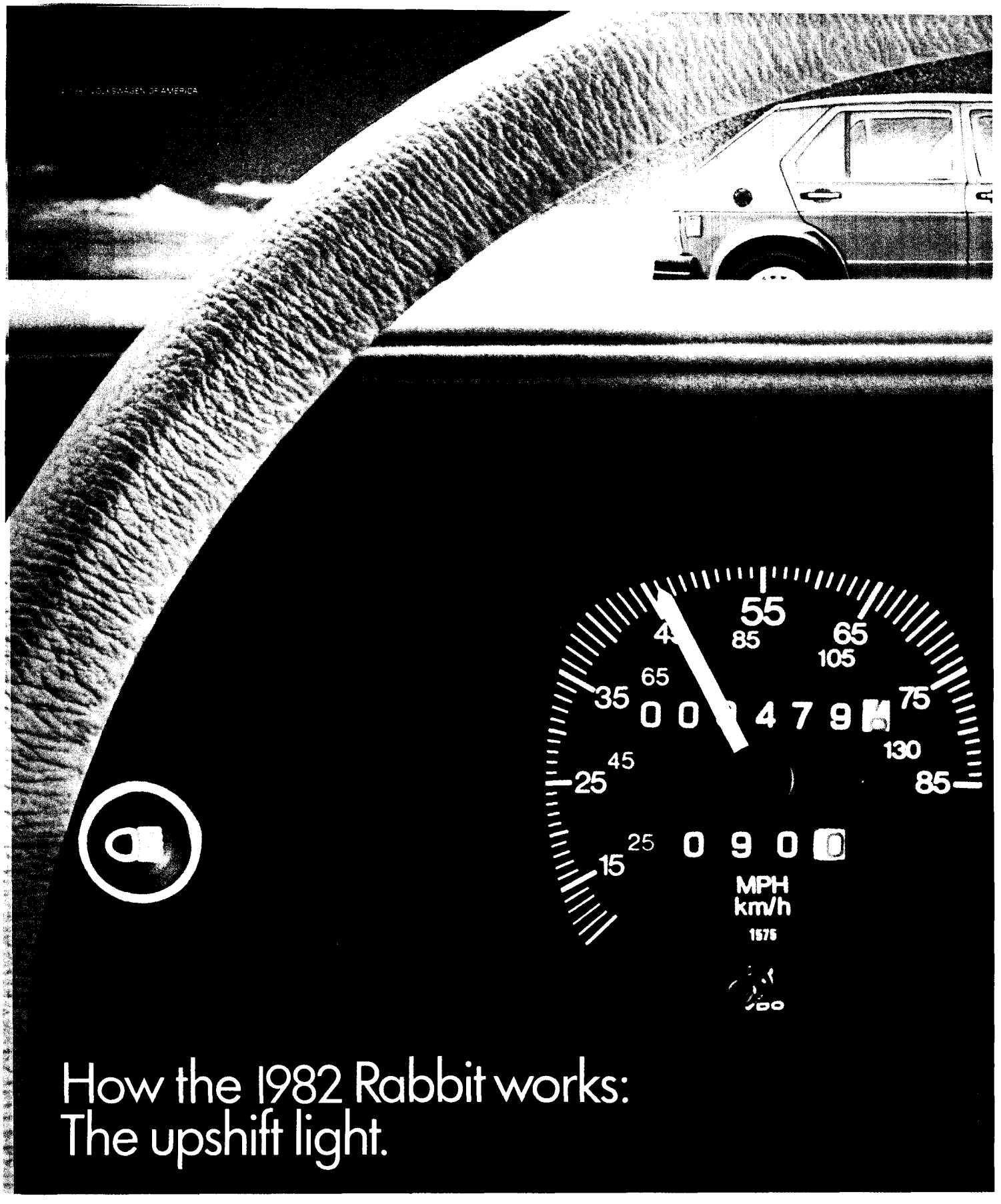

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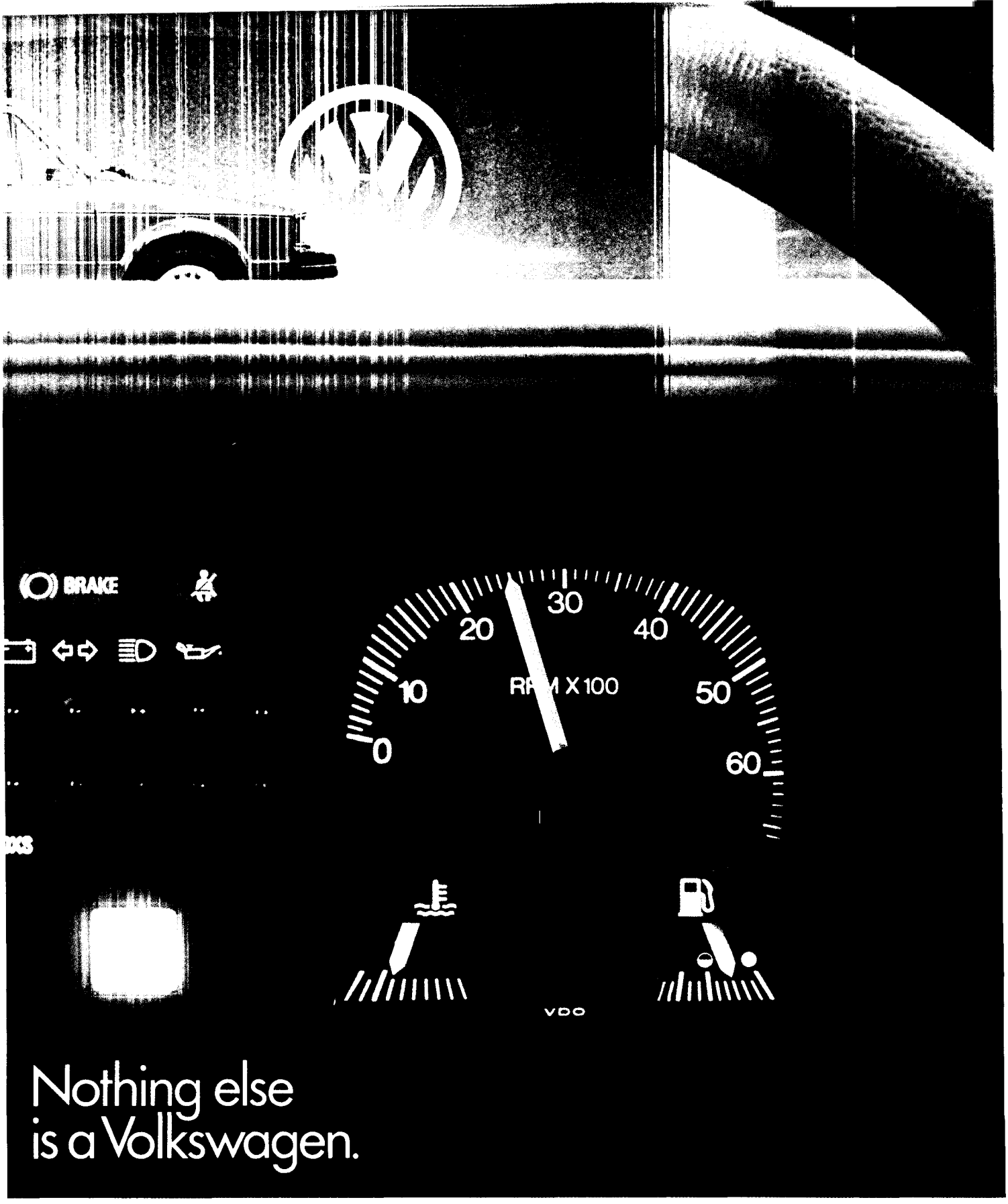

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David Hockney Reinvents Himself

Though he is one of our most successful painters, he is spending more and more time designing opera sets—most recently for a Metropolitan Opera production this month. Why?

BY MARK STEINBRINK

David Hockney in his Los Angeles home.

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David Hockney sprawls in a white suit on the luggage in the back of his red station wagon, his saddle oxfords hanging out the back window, as the arid landscape of California's Central Valley passes by. The British-born painter and a band of friends are en route from San Francisco, where Hockney has been lecturing, to his adopted home of Los Angeles. And, as usual, even in motion, Hockney is never very far from his work: He is listening to a tape-deck play a four-hand piano version of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. For most of the past year he has been consumed with one project, designing the sets and costumes for the Metropolitan Opera's three-part Stravinsky evening, premiering this month. *The Rite of Spring* will lead off, followed by Stravinsky's earlier opera, *Le Rossignol*, and his later, stylized, *Oedipus Rex*.

This is Hockney's second collaboration with the Met. His sets for last season's *Parade* triple bill stole the show. When the curtain fell opening night, the Met audience joined in one chorus calling for the designer. Hockney wouldn't take a bow on stage, feeling that the honor was due artistic director John Dexter, but the audience spotted the artist in its midst, crowded around him, and began shouting his name. After the success of *Parade*, Hockney recalls, no one thought he could pull it off again. "But they're wrong," he says with a grin, "the Stravinsky triple bill is even better."

Hockney's ventures into stage design are a major part of his evolution as an artist—a continuing process of self-renewal, in his art and in his life, that he has called "reinventing" himself. It is something of a financial sacrifice as well. He is, after all, one of the most successful painters in the world, receiving the supreme accolade of a retrospective at the Louvre's Musée des Arts Decoratif in 1974. Starting with his first one-man show in 1963, a year after he completed graduate studies at the Royal College of Art, Hockney has enjoyed not only art-world acclaim, but a widespread and devoted public following. His paintings regularly sell for more than $100,000.

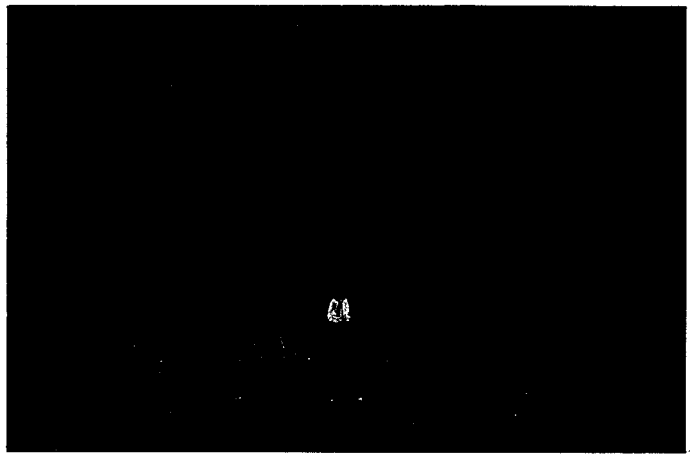
Since he took up the Stravinsky commission, however, Hockney has virtually abandoned painting to work on his set designs. Other artists—notably Picasso, Chagall, Rauschenberg, and Warhol—have also designed sets for opera and dance. But none of them ever devoted so much time and creative energy to such an ephemeral art form, one which most painters would consider tangential. Hockney, at 44, is different. With *Rite* following so swiftly upon *Parade* (he also did the sets for *The Magic Flute* in 1977 and *The Rake's Progress* in 1974 at England's Glyndebourne Festival), Hockney seems in the process of making the theater a second home, his set designs a second career.

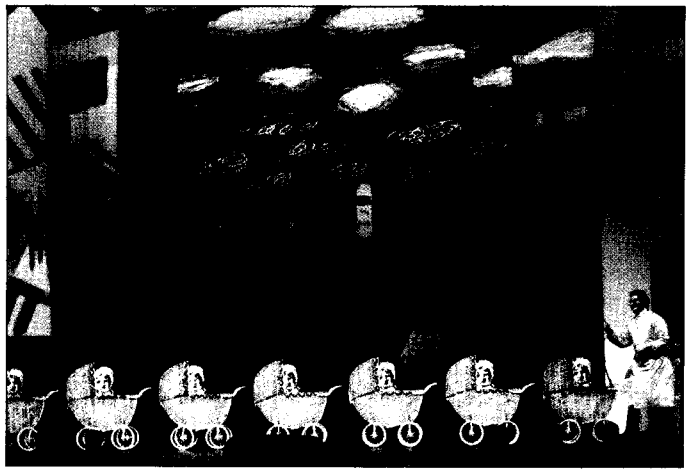
Hockney's entire career, in fact, has been a series of changes and growth. In the early 1960s he became known as the "King of Pop" in England, mostly because his colors were bright and because he was painting figuratively in an age of abstraction. Even then, however, the label hardly did him justice. His awkward and roughly painted figures of that time owed something to Francis Bacon, something to Larry Rivers, but mostly to his own unfailing childlike—or primitivist—eye that, no matter what the distortion, always got things "right."

Toward the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, Hockney's paintings became more literal, characterized by closer attention to detail and a draftsmanship that for a while seemed to be heading in the direction of super-realism. (It never got there; Hockney has always been too much an artist to become a slave to the minutiae of reality.) This change coincided with Hockney's move to Los Angeles in 1971. It was then that he painted his famous "Splash" series; his paintings became full of the imagery of southern California—swimming pools, the blank facades of modern architecture, and the reflecting expanses of picture windows, manicured lawns, and the ever-present palm trees.

Hockney's eclecticism is expressed not only in his development as an artist, but in the disparate elements that he will often combine in a single canvas. Paintings such as "Picture of a Hollywood Swimming Pool" (1964), with its consciously imitative Dubuffet squiggles, and his "Sunbather" (1966), with its nude looking like he walked out of early Picasso, are examples of varied stylistic influences that make Hockney's work seem a grab bag of modernist devices. In his book, *David Hockney by David Hockney*, he says that eclecticism in the end can be a synthesis. "Although I am a figurative artist," he writes, "I am very conscious of all that has happened in art during the last 75 years. I don't ignore it, I feel I've tried to assimilate it into my kind of art." Henry Geldzahler, art critic, commissioner of cultural affairs for New York City, and a longtime friend of the artist, agrees. While his work is sometimes "overloaded with information and inconsistent stylistic devices," says Geldzahler, Hockney pulls it all off with his "presence, sureness, and wit."

"I have noticed," says Hockney, "that I'm a rather difficult artist for what we might call the serious art world to categorize." He attributes his protean development to a fear of repetition that might lead to stylistic rigidity. As he explains in his book, the only way to avoid this trap is to "make a





Hockney's sets for the *Parade* triple bill at the Metropolitan Opera last season were as acclaimed as the performances. Above, his set for *L'Efant et les Sortilèges*, and below, for *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, Acts III and II of *Parade*.

PHOTOS BY JOHAN ELBERS

Mark Steinbrink is a freelance writer with a special interest in the arts.

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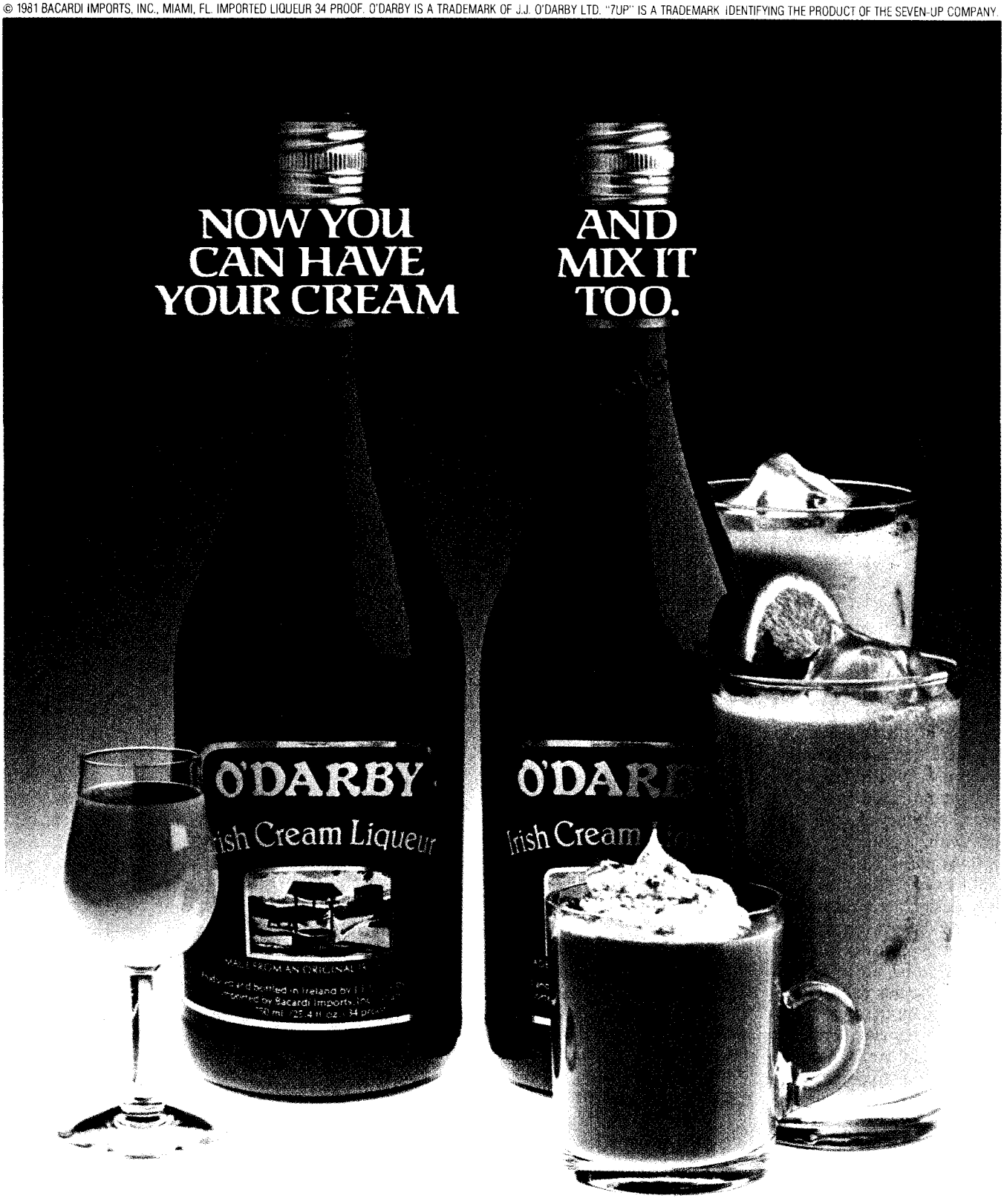

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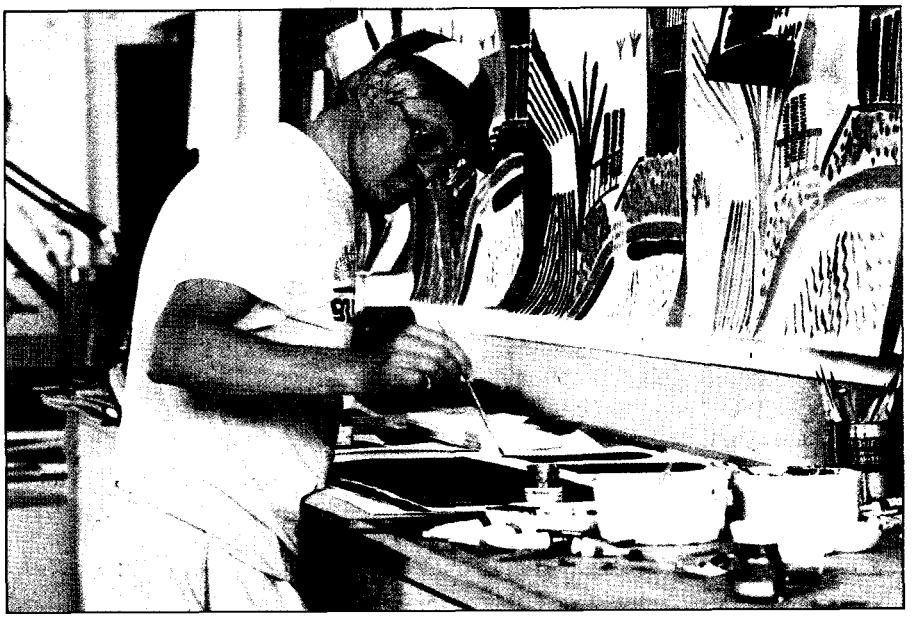


SAM KWONG

Hockney: "I'm a rather difficult artist for the serious art world to categorize."

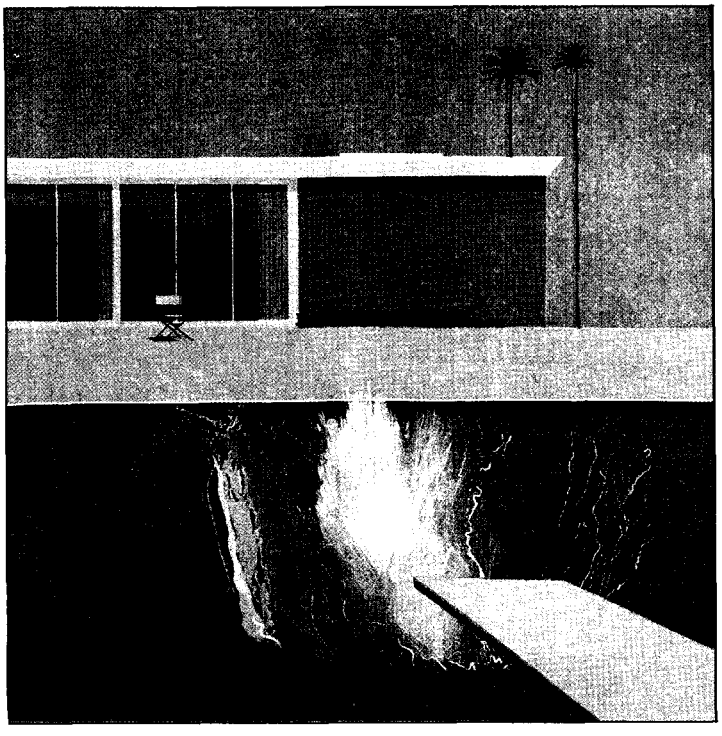
complete change, stop, and just think again. When you stop doing something, it doesn't mean you are rejecting the previous work; that's the mistake; it's not rejecting, it's saying I have exploited it enough now and I wish to take a look at another corner."

Hockney's stage designs, first for Glyndebourne and especially for the Met, are a thorough examination of one such "other corner." The artistic problems in designing for the stage demand different solutions from those demanded by easel painting. Henry Geldzahler has called Hockney "an inspired, literate, and sophisticated primitive," and this description captures the oxymoronic essence of Hockney's stage design. It is truly a primitivist art of extraordinary complexity and sophistication—from the bold Matisse-like lines of the trees in a garden scene to the Harlequin standing on his hands in the weightless space of surrealism. The ladder, triangle, and props behind the Harlequin elegantly sum up hard-edged abstraction, from Kandinsky's early experiments to Frank Stella. The perspective for which Hockney has always been famous reaches a dramatic intensity in his stage designs, perhaps most impressively in *L'Enfant et Les Sortilèges*, the third work in the *Parade* triple bill. There, with a plunging perspective, he transformed the huge Met stage into a small nursery as seen from a child's point of view.

His stage designs have also influenced Hockney's recent paintings, such as "Nichol's Canyon" (1980) and "Mullholland Drive" (1980). They show a certain childlike quality and a "painterly" brush technique—a complete change from the flat, diluted acrylic surfaces of his earlier Los Angeles paintings.

Hockney's life mirrors these artistic changes. He was born in the industrial city of Bradford, Yorkshire, in 1937, to lower middle-class parents (he keeps his broad Bradford accent even to this day, to the delight of Englishmen more interested in veracity than pretense). He attended grammar school on scholarship, and state grants paid his way through art school in Bradford and several years at the Royal College of Art in London.

It was in college that Hockney became increasingly conscious of his homosexuality. A fellow student, R.B. Kitaj, who is not homosexual, urged him to paint that which he felt passionately. Hockney says that he became more open through his painting. He calls his work of that time, and immediately after college, his "propaganda paintings." With openly homosexual themes, they carried such titles as "Queer" (1960), "We Two Boys Together Clinging" (1961), and "Going to Be a Queen for Tonight" (1960). They were often numbered in code to represent the



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Even before he moved to Los Angeles in 1971, Hockney was fascinated with the city's iconography. Left: "A Bigger Splash" (1967). Right: "Cubist (American) Boy Colourful Tree" (1964).

HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN PHOTO BY JOHN TENNANT

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initials of boyfriends depicted in the paintings. This was Hockney's most militant period; as he became more accepting, the militancy quieted, and in his paintings of the later 1960s and 1970s, his homosexuality is treated simply as a natural, but by no means predominant, element of his life.

In 1961 Hockney came to New York. He dyed his hair blond and began in earnest his "reinvention." Soon after, he moved to Los Angeles, partly because he thought the city offered greater freedom to live the gay life. "You can live your own life in America, even live out the wildest fantasies—and no one bothers you." This was also the time of Hockney's many paintings of boys in showers—because, he says, he noticed that Americans are always taking showers—and his "Cubist (American) Boy Colourful Tree" (1964), which celebrates the "sunny land of movie stars and beautiful semi-naked people" that he had found.

What held him there, however, had less to do with homosexuality than with the aesthetic freshness of the city. No one had really painted Los Angeles before; to live and paint there would be to create, truly, *de nouveau*. Just as he had reinvented himself, Hockney began to make over his art in Los Angeles. He switched to acrylic paints, which he applied thinly (adding detergent so it would soak into the raw duck canvas), creating the cool, flat, shadowless surfaces that have become as much our image of California as Hollywood glitter and gold.

In the early 1970s Hockney moved to Paris. His apartment in the Cour de Rohan became the gathering place for much of Saint-Germaine-des-Prés. About four o'clock each afternoon, Hockney's studio would begin filling up with people—the usual assortment of friends, fellow painters, dealers and their minions, and art groupies that seem to follow the artist wherever he travels. Hockney, at his easel, would valiantly try to continue working as the people around him drank tea, listened to music, and repeated the gossip of the day.

"Sometimes I could continue working, but usually not," he recalls. "The problem was that people stayed until 2 AM. I wanted to go to bed early so that I could get up at six and start painting, because I knew that everybody would be there again at four in the afternoon for tea! In the end I was living on four hours of sleep a night and wasn't getting any work done. Finally, it got to be too much, and one Monday morning I simply packed my bags, closed the apartment, and left for London." Sometimes, he says, "I think I'd be a better artist if I were a less congenial one."

From London, Hockney soon moved back to Los Angeles, where he recently bought the half-million-dollar house in the Hollywood hills that he had rented for the previous two years. He also keeps a tiny studio in New York's Greenwich Village. With its bare walls, mattress on the floor next to his easel, clothing strewn about, it looks like the first act of *La Bohème*—except that it's too small. In any case, it comes in handy while he's working on his projects at the Met.

Last season at the Met, Hockney and artistic director John Dexter struggled long to find a unifying theme for the three essentially dissimilar works that made up the *Parade* evening. Their task wasn't as difficult with the Stravinsky works this year. "All three works deal with ritual masks," says Hockney, "and they seem quite naturally to move from birth and nature in *Rite*, through an examination of reality in *Rossignol*, culminating in self-knowledge in *Oedipus*."

But Hockney is a meticulous and obsessive artist, and set designing is always for him hard labor. "I've done about 14 versions of *Rite* and 10 of *Rossignol*. A while ago, after I had already done 12 versions of *Rite*, I went to a German spa with Henry Geldzahler, supposedly to rest. But I couldn't rest. I kept thinking about *Rite* and listening to the music. I knew that something wasn't right and it bothered me. The problem was that each of the different sets for *Rite* didn't add up to a whole. Each seemed to fit only a part of the music. With each design I'd learn something new, but it still took me about 14 versions to bring it all together."

In his quest for completeness, Hockney had his own computerized miniature light board and model of the Met stage built in his home, so that he could experiment with various lighting possibilities. This, he says, allows him to approximate almost exactly the effects his sets will have in the theater.

Hockney has also used his sophisticated sense of perspective to unify the evening. *Rite*, representing the beginnings of life and consciousness, will seem furthest away to the audience. *Rossignol*, symbolizing the imagination, will be closer, and *Oedipus*, symbolizing self-knowledge and death, will actually engulf the audience. Hockney has designed sets that will combine with the Met decor: The proscenium and front part of the house are actually incorporated into the stage design.

What are Hockney's plans after the Met? He mulled the question recently as he floated in the pool of his Hollywood home. "What I want to do now," he says, "is take two years off from the theater and do nothing but paint and read. There's too much pressure with the deadlines and all. Anyway, everything in the theater is too ephemeral. It only lasts a moment, and then all you have are photographs of stage sets and memories of a good time. I want to think about only what *I* want to think about for two years, and bring some of the things I have learned working on the design of opera sets to my paintings."

With that, he pushes off across his pool, dives, and then surfaces. His eyes alight with a look of mischievous adventure and new worlds to conquer. "Of course, I'd also like to make a movie. I've never made one before, and I have some ideas that might be interesting." ■

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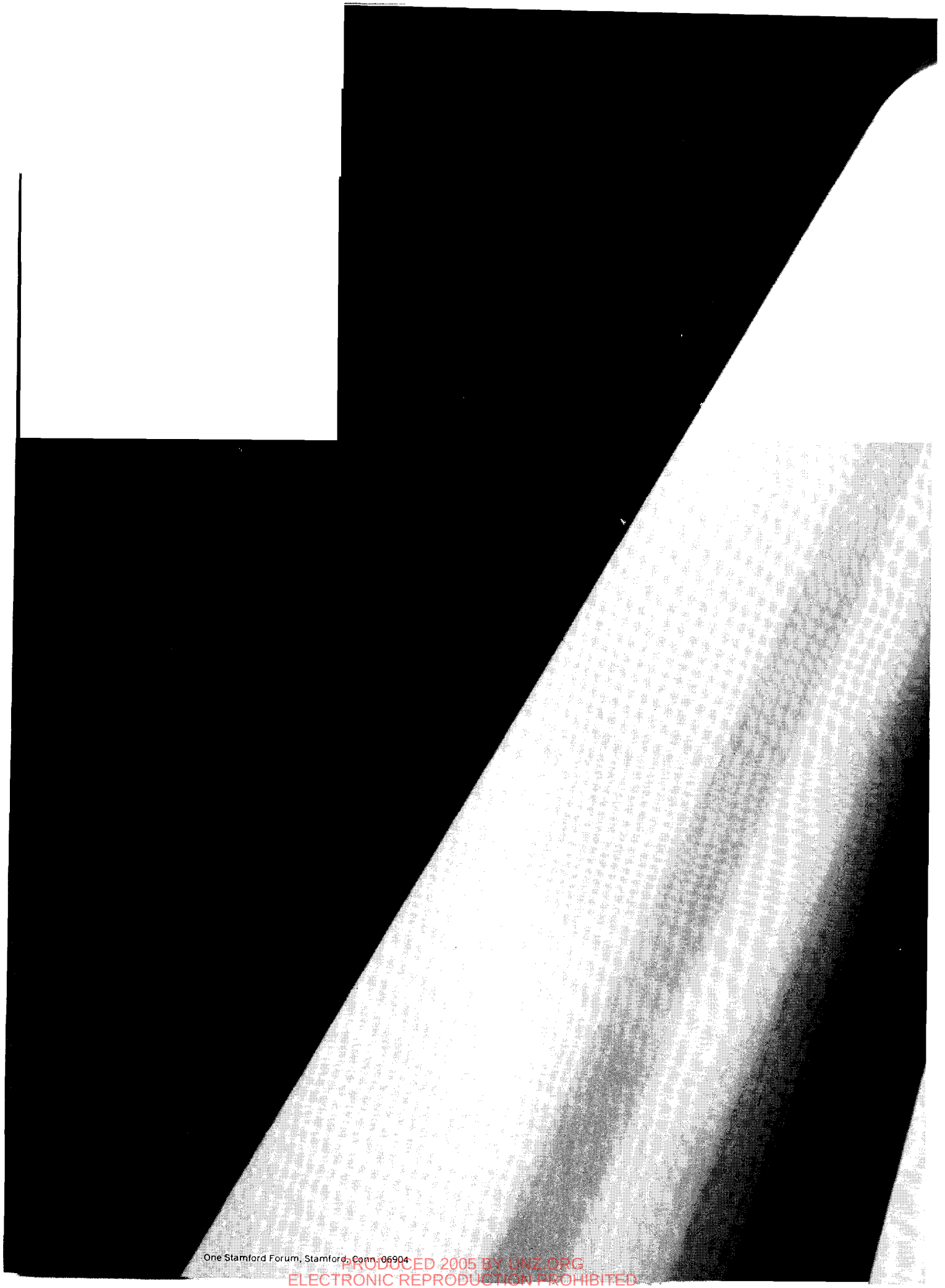

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Michael Bennett Tries to Do It Again

He hasn't had a hit since his Broadway masterwork, "A Chorus Line," six years ago. Now, he's out to prove himself all over again with a new show-biz musical, "Dream Girls."

BY SCOT HALLER

Tap, tap, tap. While a three-piece band rips through a melody, Michael Bennett is dancing in his seat at a New York rehearsal room. At 38, Bennett looks more like an aspiring tyro than the man who created and directed *A Chorus Line*, a Broadway masterwork that at its peak four years ago earned $90,000 a week for Bennett. There's an orange baseball cap on his head, a pack of cigarettes in his hands, and a nervous smile on his face. The grin disappears only when there's a complication in the enterprise before him: *Dream Girls*, his first musical in three years, which opens on Broadway this month.

Scot Haller is a senior editor of *Saturday Review*.

At this pivotal point in his career, Michael Bennett wants to prove that he is not a one-show sensation. *A Chorus Line*, which won nine Tony Awards and a Pulitzer Prize, is still playing to enthusiastic houses and is destined to become the longest-running show in Broadway history. But since its arrival six years ago, Shubert Alley has waited for Bennett to mount a worthy successor. "With every new show, Michael is in competition with himself," says Bennett's longtime friend, producer Bob Avian. Bennett's last show, *Ballroom*, a 1978 musical about a matronly widow who finds new love in a dance hall, lasted only three months on Broadway, losing $2 million for its sole investor: Michael Bennett. About the same time, a much-publicized three-movie pact with Universal collapsed. If *Dream Girls* is a hit, Bennett will have finally passed his audition.

Dream Girls, which cost $3 million (not Bennett's this time), is a nightmarish look at the dilemmas of black entertainers in the predominantly white pop marketplace of the 1960s. A cautionary tale in sequins and satin, the show focuses on a trio of black female singers whose careers are traced from the Apollo Theater to

MARTHA SWOPE

Bennett in rehearsal with his dream girls: (clockwise from top left) Sheryl Lee Ralph, Jennifer Holliday, Loretta Devine, and Deborah Burrell.

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Buffalo Bill

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rides again!

His real name was William F. Cody and he really was a peerless pony express rider, matchless buffalo hunter, heroic Army scout, staunch Indian fighter and respected Indian friend. He was also one of the world's greatest showmen, the originator of the granddaddy of all "Wild West" shows. Now his spirit rides again in a dramatic exhibition of the memorabilia of his career, along with famous paintings and sculpture of the frontier, titled "Buffalo Bill and the Wild West" at the Brooklyn Museum.

Wherever he rode, as scout or showman, he was always out front, bigger than life, leading his comrades, showing the way. To audiences accustomed to seeing blacks as slaves, women as weak, Indians as inferiors, he showed a black cowboy as a star performer, a woman as a sharpshooter, and Indians as the equals in skill, daring and dignity of the finest horsemen in the world. He wanted to give us lessons in history, and he gave us lessons in humanity.

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"Buffalo Bill and the Wild West" appears at the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY, November 21, 1981 to January 17, 1982; Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, PA, February 13 to April 11, 1982. The exhibition is sponsored by Philip Morris Incorporated and The Seven-Up Company.

(top left) Frederic Remington, INDIAN CAMP ON CHEYENNE RIVER. (bottom left) Thomas Mickell Burnham, THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION. (top center) THE FAREWELL SHOT. (top right) MISS ANNIE OAKLEY, THE PEERLESS SHOT. (bottom right) Rosa Bonheur, COL. WILLIAM F. CODY. All material shown courtesy of Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, WY. © Philip Morris Inc 1981

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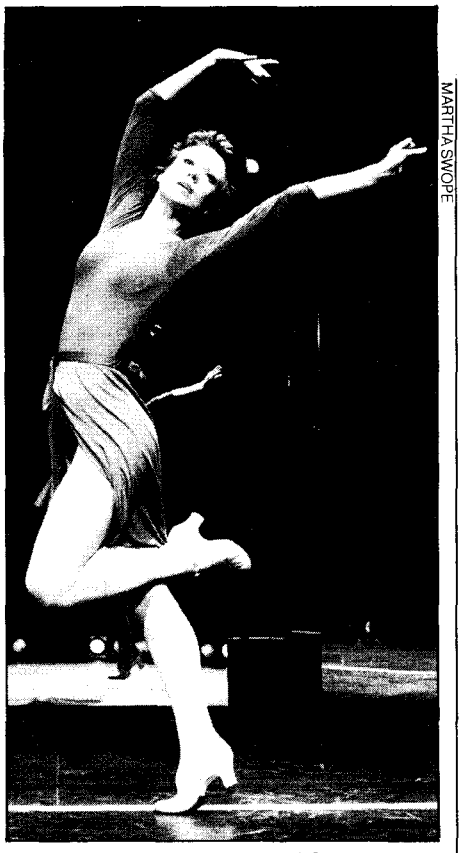
national stardom and the Metropolitan Opera House. (Originally back-up singers called the Dreamettes, the group becomes the Dreams when they form their own act.) No, the Dreams are not the Supremes, says Bennett. "There were hundreds and hundreds of girl groups back then. It's just that the Supremes became the famous one. So now I'm saying that there was another group that became famous." Nonetheless, the group's lead singer is named Deena Jones, uncomfortably close to Diana Ross, and a 1965 Supremes album is on the stereo in Bennett's office. "When the girls do the title song," says the show's composer Henry Krieger, picking up the album jacket and pointing to the cover photo, "it should look something like this."

A period piece, *Dream Girls* also chronicles the rise of soul music on the pop charts, the acceptance of a black sound in white society. (The cast of 32 includes only five whites.) With devastating effectiveness, the show details the behind-the-scenes efforts of black entrepreneurs to penetrate the lucrative pop field. Although the women have the title roles, the men have the power in this musical: The Dreams' careers are determined by the fellows around them —the star they sing behind, personal managers, a record producer. To propel the group into national headlines, the manager dismisses the trio's best vocalist, Effie White, an Aretha Franklin sort of soul singer, and spotlights instead the less talented but more glamorous Deena. If *A Chorus Line* celebrated the dignity of work as an entertainer, *Dream Girls* examines the indignities that accompany performing. "It's about show *business* as opposed to show *art*," says Avian.

Although the New York critics will decide the show's fate this month, *Dream Girls* was enthusiastically received during its Boston tryout. The musical confirmed Bennett as a most fluent interpreter of show-biz idiom. With potential hit songs and extravagant costumes, *Dream Girls* resembles an old-fashioned Broadway show, but it is also an indictment of its own razzmatazz. "Dream girls help you to survive,/Dream girls keep your fantasies alive," sings the trio as its own behavior turns unbecoming. When the show is at its best, the group's songs comment on their personal lives; the hit-tune banalities are a bittersweet counterpoint to off-stage realities. At its least effective, however, the show takes these pop sentiments at face value.

Ironically, this denunciation of star-making is likely to launch a new star of its own: 21-year-old Jennifer Holliday, who



MARTHA SWOPE

Bennett's ex-wife and protégée, Donna McKechnie, as Cassie in *A Chorus Line*.

plays the gifted, spurned Effie White. Blessed with a mesmerizing voice and stage presence to match, Holliday sings a torch ballad at the end of Act I that is the show's high point. That song represents *Dream Girls* at its most heart-rending and Michael Bennett at his most cunning. As Effie finishes her show-stopping number and the audience enthusiastically applauds, the Dreams suddenly step out front and start their act, once again usurping Effie's rightful spotlight. In Boston, Bennett was doing the usual out-of-town tinkering, and if *Dream Girls* arrives on Broadway with more such moments, it will surely enliven a lackluster musical season.

Unlike most directors, Bennett develops his big-budget Broadway musicals in small, intimate workshops. Cultivating the material with a battery of writers, designers, and performers over a lengthy period, he assesses the stage merits of a project through trial runs. "Most Broadway shows are mounted in six weeks after all the writing and designing have been done," says Bennett. "But I never believe anything works until I see it on people."

The workshop format has served Bennett in a variety of ways. It was an essential step in the evolution of *A Chorus Line*. One night in January 1974, the director gathered two dozen dancer friends in a studio, queried them about their lives, and then fashioned those tape-recorded conversations into the outline for a musical. With a skeletal book and no music, he began workshops at Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival, where *A Chorus Line* was first produced.

Dream Girls also evolved out of workshops—four six-week sessions held over the course of a year. With a few exceptions, the performers who developed the characters during these sessions are now playing them in the Broadway production. During this process, roles and plot developments were altered to suit specific performers. Effie White, for example, originally left show business after her dramatic dismissal at the close of Act I. But once Jennifer Holliday joined the workshop and became an increasingly powerful presence in the role, it was decided that Effie should remain an entertainer in Act II.

The workshop approach also works well in fostering plays that have a special rapport with audiences. Echoing an observation first made by director Joshua Logan, Bennett believes there are two kinds of theater: hot and cool. A cool play relies on the imaginary "fourth wall" of the set; the on-stage action never acknowledges or incorporates the audience. "Certain devices break that fourth wall and allow the actors to connect more with the audience," he says. "In *A Chorus Line*, for instance, they talk out front at a director, and so they're talking to you. Even *Amadeus* I consider hot theater because the hero, Salieri, addresses the audience. *Dream Girls* has a lot of on-stage segments, and the characters are *supposed* to be in front of an audience for much of the show. So you don't have to pretend that you're not sitting there. That's what I call hot theater."

And where does the ill-fated *Ballroom* fit into this theory? "*Ballroom* had *very thick* fourth walls," says Bennett. "I couldn't get through them with a sledgehammer."

Dream Girls is an original musical, but the idea did not originate with Michael Bennett. The show was initially conceived 16 years ago by playwright-director Tom Eyen, a prominent figure in avant-garde theater (*Why Hanna's Skirt Won't Stay Down*) as well as a scriptwriter for *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*. "I've always been fascinated by top-harmony trios," says Eyen, the lyricist-librettist of *Dream Girls*. "To me, three-girl harmony *is* music, groups like the Andrews Sisters, the McGuire Sisters."

Three years ago, Eyen mentioned his

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proposed musical to Henry Krieger, a pop composer who had written for *Captain Kangaroo* and once managed several black performers. Just as Eyen was fascinated with harmony vocalists, Krieger was intrigued by the pop sounds of the early 1960s. "The best singles ever were put out then," he says. "People like Jerry Butler, Mary Wells." Having worked with Eyen on *The Dirtiest Show in Town*, Krieger accepted the offer.

Meanwhile, Michael Bennett was moving into his own dream factory in lower Manhattan. With his *Chorus Line* profits, he had purchased an eight-story building, intending to establish a creative organization that was a cross between Francis Coppola's Zoetrope Studios and Papp's Shakespeare Festival. It was to be a low-keyed environment in which to test and nurture material. At Bennett's urging, set designer Robin Wagner and costume designer Theoni V. Aldredge moved their operations into the same building, as did several dance companies.

One show Bennett developed—and subsequently dropped—was a punk musical called *Battle of the Giants*, which he asked Tom Eyen to direct. Eyen declined, but suggested an alternative idea. Two days later, he arrived at Bennett's facility with Krieger and a trio of Dreams in tow. (Two of those singers—Sheryl Lee Ralph and Loretta Devine—are now starring in the show.) "I remember vividly the image of these three fabulous-looking women singing around a piano," says Bob Avian. "They did about 17 numbers, and afterwards, Michael called me over and asked me what I thought. And I said, 'This show has three beautiful chicks singing great songs at you all night long. What more could you want from a musical?' " Eyen had the songs but no book or plot, and he asked Bennett to collaborate. Bennett agreed. Having spent two years of the mid-1960s as a dancer and assistant choreographer on the *Hullaballoo* rock TV series, he was attracted to the material—so attracted that, after the second workshop, he took over direction.

Like *A Chorus Line, Dream Girls* has a backstage setting to achieve maximum theatricality. "The rock concert of the 1960s *was* the theater of the 1960s," says set designer Robin Wagner. To emphasize that idea, Wagner has stripped the playing space to its essentials; his set consists primarily of two ramps and five portable lighting towers, which form different configurations to suggest a dressing room, a nightclub, the wings of a theater. The on-stage, visible presence of the lights underscores the omnipresence of show business in these lives, as do the extravagant, ornamental costumes designed by Theoni V. Aldredge.

To commit suicide in Buffalo is redundant," says a dancer in *A Chorus Line*, and Michael Bennett should know. The son of Salvatore Di Figilia, a machinist for Chevrolet, Bennett grew up in Buffalo, New York, where his mother, a Sears secretary, enrolled him in dance school at age three. He was soon performing with a local troupe, Little Stars of Tomorrow, which put on recitals in reform schools and hospitals. A semester shy of graduation, Bennett left high school and his hometown to play in a 1962 European tour of *West Side Story*. Returning to New York, he danced in several shows before turning choreographer at age 23 with *A Joyful Noise* (1967), a John Raitt musical about a country-western singer. The show ran for only 12 performances, but Bennett received a Tony nomination for best choreographer—a feat repeated for six consecutive years with *Henry, Sweet Henry*, *Promises, Promises*, *Coco*, *Company*, and *Follies*. With that last show, Bennett graduated to director, sharing the credit with Harold Prince in 1971.

Bennett's musicals have brought back emotion, passion, affection for the audience.

Called in to rescue *Seesaw* during its disastrous 1973 out-of-town tryout, Bennett transformed this ragtag adaptation of *Two for the Seesaw* into a Broadway sleeper. One of his first changes was an added touch of backstage business: He turned the heroine's best girlfriend into a male choreographer, cast his friend Tommy Tune in the part, and then gave this peripheral character the show's climactic production number in the second act. Two years later, *A Chorus Line* established him as lord of the updated, upgraded backstage musical.

The day after *A Chorus Line* opened, the boy from Buffalo bought himself a $40,000 white Rolls-Royce. Then, in 1976, he married his leading lady, Donna McKechnie, who had won her own Tony as Cassie, the featured dancer too talented for the chorus. A longtime protégée of Bennett's, McKechnie was in effect *his* dream girl. After he highlighted her with dance solos in *Promises, Promises* and *Company*, she was pronounced a major new talent. But, as with Cassie, McKechnie was unable to make the transition from acclaimed dancer to acclaimed actress. Her marriage to Bennett lasted only a year; she hasn't worked on Broadway since she gave up the part of Cassie five years ago.

Bennett's real contribution to the contemporary musical is not so much innovation as renovation. He has brought back the qualities that have been noticeably absent of late: emotion, passion, and affection for the audience. The Bob Fosse and Stephen Sondheim-Harold Prince musicals of the 1970s took Broadway from the Age of Aquarius to the Age of Angst, but their best shows—*Company*, *Chicago*, and *Sweeney Todd*—were as icy in spirit as they were sophisticated in execution. When these shows recognized the presence of the audience, they did so only to chastise us. Bennett, however, has striven to combine narrative invention and emotional warmth, as did Jerome Robbins.

A Chorus Line dared to include a show-stopper that was not a song-and-dance but a teary monologue: the recollections of a Puerto Rican dancer who had worked in a drag show. With this musical, Bennett demonstrated that the predicaments of show-biz characters could indeed prove applicable beyond Times Square: He transformed the drama of a Broadway audition into a celebration of the American work ethic, giving the show-business musical a legitimacy and pertinence it has seldom achieved. If *Company* and *Chicago* played on our anxieties, Bennett's shows have steadied our nerves: What we did for love was all right, after all, they tell us. Is it any wonder that *A Chorus Line* is still running years after the frostbitten musicals of Fosse and Prince have closed?

Dream Girls is as bleak a portrait of show business as Bennett has presented, but, ironically, the bittersweet tenor of the material has buoyed the director's spirits. The post-*Chorus Line* excesses have ebbed. The white Rolls-Royce has been sold. The *Ballroom* experience has provided some perspective. "I'm having a wonderful time," Bennett says of *Dream Girls*. "That's not usually the case. I usually suffer much more than I'm suffering in rehearsal. Now, that could be two things: My analyst has done me a lot of good in the last five years. Or this show has a momentum of its own." Ever the appreciative collaborator, he quickly adds, "Or maybe it's both things. I don't want to put my analyst down." ■

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Opera's Rising Star

At 33, Catherine Malfitano is being groomed for major roles by the Met. Her acting is masterful, her soprano voice brilliant. She may well emerge as another Callas.

BY STEPHEN WADSWORTH

In opera, singers are routinely called artists even though few actually merit the term. There are lots of terrific voices around, however, and a number of singers, many of them young and American, who are interested in translating vocal tone, line, and dynamics into drama. But few singers are secure enough in themselves or in their techniques to plunge into the world of risk where art really begins. Maria Callas could do this. So can Catherine Malfitano.

The top brass at the Metropolitan Opera knows she can, and they are grooming this compelling 33-year-old soprano for stardom, planning new roles and productions for her into the 1985-86 season. Having proved her versatility in secondary roles from the German, Italian, and French repertories, Malfitano took on her first starring assignment at the Met last spring: Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata*, which she has sung 22 times since with the company at home and on tour. In the immediate future she will continue to do featured roles as part of the Met ensemble, gradually adding more out-and-out leads, such as Constanze in Mozart's *The Abduction From the Seraglio* and undoubtedly the title role in Berg's *Lulu*. This season she sings two national broadcasts from the Met. Telecasts are inevitable.

Malfitano's visibility is increasing abroad, too. Last summer she knocked the august Salzburg Festival on its ear singing all four heroines in Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* in company with conductor James Levine, tenor Placido Domingo, and director Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. Next year she'll sing *Hoffmann* in Lyons and Salzburg, *Traviata* in New York and Hamburg, and the world premiere of Thomas Pasatieri's setting of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* in Atlanta. And to celebrate the tenth anniversary of her still-tender career she'll make her debut at the Paris Opera in *Pagliacci*, opposite tenor Jon Vickers.

Malfitano as Thérèse/Tirésias in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* last season at the Met.

Among opera professionals, Malfitano is known as a smart, determined artist who's deeply committed to her work. "She strikes me as the most exciting young singer I have worked with," says Domingo. "I think she's a complete artist. She has the voice of a real actress because she expresses so many feelings and characters with it, and her ability to act is I think without limit." Matthew Epstein, her former manager, who helped build her career, says, "She's the kind of artist who's never satisfied and wants always to go further. I don't think we've seen more than two-thirds, maybe not even half of what she's capable of."

What we *have* seen is a beautiful, dark-eyed young woman with a good figure, a commanding presence, and a sizable lyric soprano voice. To some ears, it is a voice that is warm and full (*New York Times* critic Harold Schonberg, when he heard her as a student, likened it to Licia Albanese's). To others, the voice is cool and even edgy. But what she is able to do with her voice is what Malfitano is all about. She's out to express feelings, and she stops at nothing—including what might seem to some an ugly sound or ungraceful posture—to express them truthfully. The beauty of her work, her star quality, is her willingness to break the rules and find an ever more specific reality for the characters she plays.

"My first attraction to opera," says Malfitano, "wasn't vocal at all. It was the acting, the dramatic possibilities. When I was younger I was attracted generally to beautiful sound—singers like Tebaldi, Ponselle, Bjoerling—but it was always the sound of the *words* and how those words affected the vocal sound that fascinated me most. It's hard for me—always has been—to separate vocal beauty from character. Somehow for me the right vocal sound comes when I know what I'm doing with the character."

At an early Met performance of *Traviata* this fall, Catherine Malfitano's Violetta swooped into the party scene in the first act—her eyes wild, her body braced for action. It was immediately clear to everyone in the theater that this wasn't a

Stephen Wadsworth, a contributing editor of *Saturday Review*, is a librettist, stage director, and dramatic coach for singers.

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Catherine Malfitano on the grand balcony at the Metropolitan Opera House.

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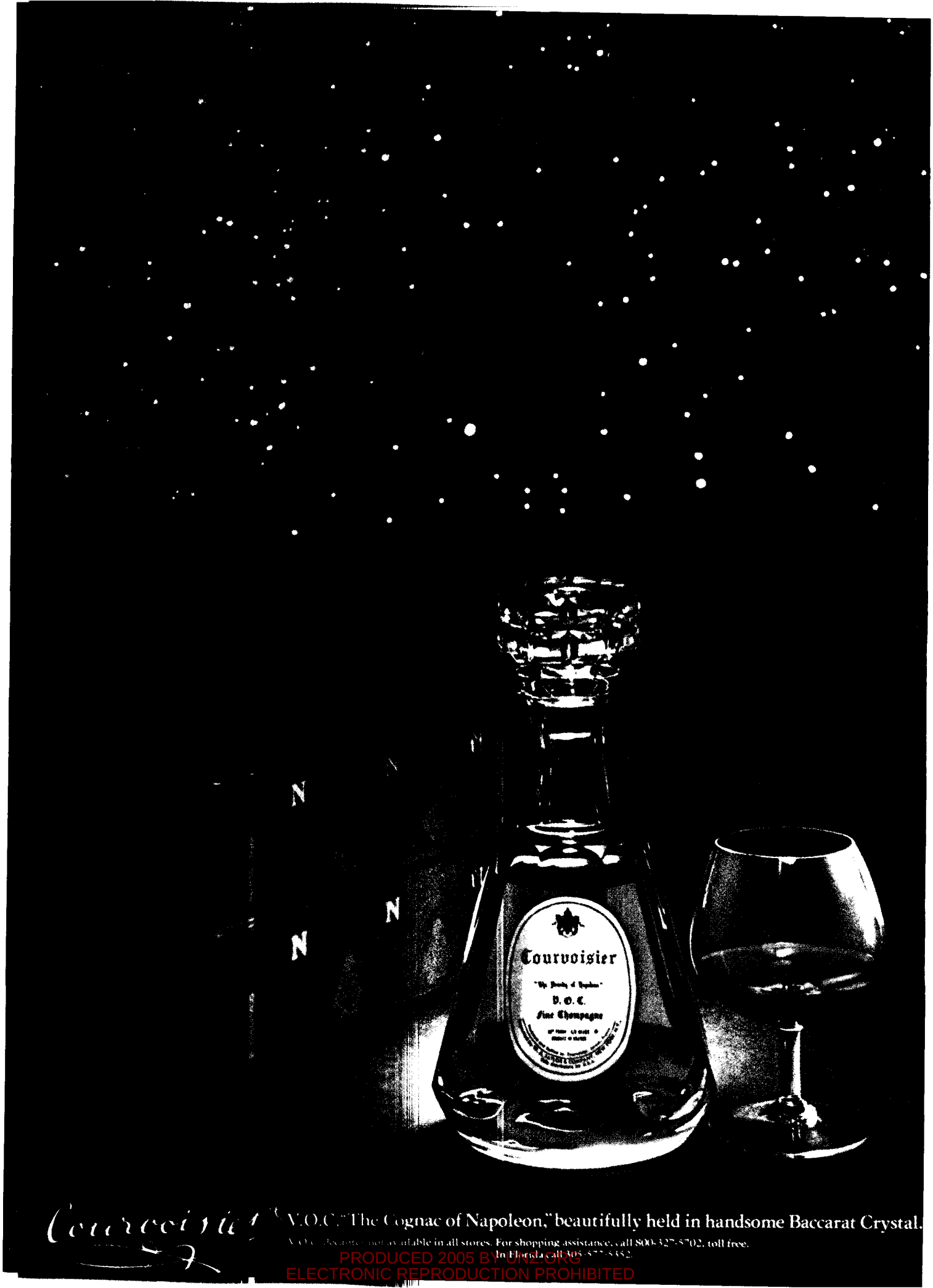

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The Met is planning new roles for Malfitano into the 1985-86 season. Her past successes include (left) Olympia in *The Tales of Hoffmann* with Placido Domingo as Hoffmann at the Salzburg Festival, and (right) Violetta in *La Traviata* at the Met.

Violetta who mimed opera-party conviviality and let the scene play *her* in self-conscious anticipation of the difficult aria at scene's end. This was a Violetta who left all inhibitions offstage and lunged through the party with a sense of abandonment and danger, a Violetta who tempted, coughed, and kissed utterly *un*operatically and who sang the aria because she *needed* to, to feel her way through a thorny problem. What is more, Malfitano sang the aria, the undoing of many a soprano, with stunning ease.

Malfitano says she has been carrying Violetta around inside her since she was 14: "Since I was a kid I've been *very* independent, rebelled against classification, made my own choices—dumb or smart—learned my own lessons. These are exactly the things I love in Violetta. There were many instinctual things that drew me to her from an early age that I couldn't put a name to until I was in my late twenties. She's grown inside me, in my unconscious, and I suddenly realize things about her in dreams or half-waking states or just walking down the street. The things I've experienced have a reflection for her life as well as mine."

Things haven't always been easy for Malfitano vocally, precisely because of her concern for character, words, and dare-all dramatic involvement. In the first five years of her career, her stagework got ahead of her singing and eventually she had to go back and rework vocally to bring herself up to snuff. There were some unfortunate performances before that time, and many in which her crystal-clear dramatic intentions were obscured or limited by vocal problems. But there have been few such performances since. There's a constant balancing in her work between intensity in her acting and control and nuance in her singing. Some of the big roles planned for Malfitano's next few years—Mozart's Donna Anna (in *Don Giovanni*) and Constanze, for example—presuppose absolute vocal virtuosity. And although she is adamant that vocal art doesn't really interest her, she realizes she'll have to keep her middle voice, which she admits is her weakest register and "always behind the rest," in fighting trim to match her brilliant top.

La Traviata is the culmination of the first stage of Malfitano's career. To date, she has concentrated on the great roles for lyric or lyric-coloratura soprano—Mimì in *La Bohème*, Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Lucia, Manon, and others. The middle voice, however, which is a technical challenge because it is hard to tame all its colors and expressive potential, might be the key to her growth. It has been said that the four scenes of *Traviata* require four different voices (as do the four different heroines of *Hoffmann*). Each is weighted in a different part of the voice, top to bottom. The first-act aria falls comfortably into Malfitano's free-flying top octave, yet she sings the rest of the role, which lies firmly in the middle voice, as tellingly as she does the aria—if not more so.

Epstein ponders this vocal development: "There's an element of weight and slice to her voice, especially in the upper reaches, which makes me think she could certainly sing *Madama Butterfly* in five years and conceivably go on to the heavier parts of Verdi and Puccini in her forties." Malfitano agrees, and mentions specific roles from the heavier repertory to which she's attracted (initially because of their dramatic challenges) and about which she thinks seriously—Tosca, Salome, even Carmen, a role associated with mezzo-sopranos. *Lulu*, a lyric-coloratura marathon, is definite. The Wedekind plays on which it is based sit on a shelf in her bathroom.

Malfitano was in a sense brought up at the Met, where her father has been a violinist for more than 25 years. Her mother was a dancer and a child actress who was to have played the lead in *National Velvet*—except that when filming was about to begin, she had grown so tall that the role was given to Elizabeth Taylor. Malfitano studied at New York City's High School of Music and Art and the Manhattan School of Music, but life at home was itself a total-immersion course in performing and the arts in general. Today, Malfitano's sister, a dancer and actress, is hoofing her way across America in a national tour of *Oklahoma!*, and her brother edits film and video tapes. Her husband, Stephen Holowid, is an opera administrator, formerly with the New York City Opera.

Her father, Joseph Malfitano, often working as many as three hours a day, developed his daughter's voice and musicality. She remembers their work on expression: "It was a great challenge to make the voice sound differently according to the markings in the music. What's a *maestoso* sound? A *giocoso* sound? I built up a library of my own vocal expressions. I also learned so much about ensemble from him—how to listen to my colleagues, to the orchestra." She's proud of a Musical Heritage Society chamber music disc she made with her father.

At the Manhattan School, the fledgling soprano immediately attracted the

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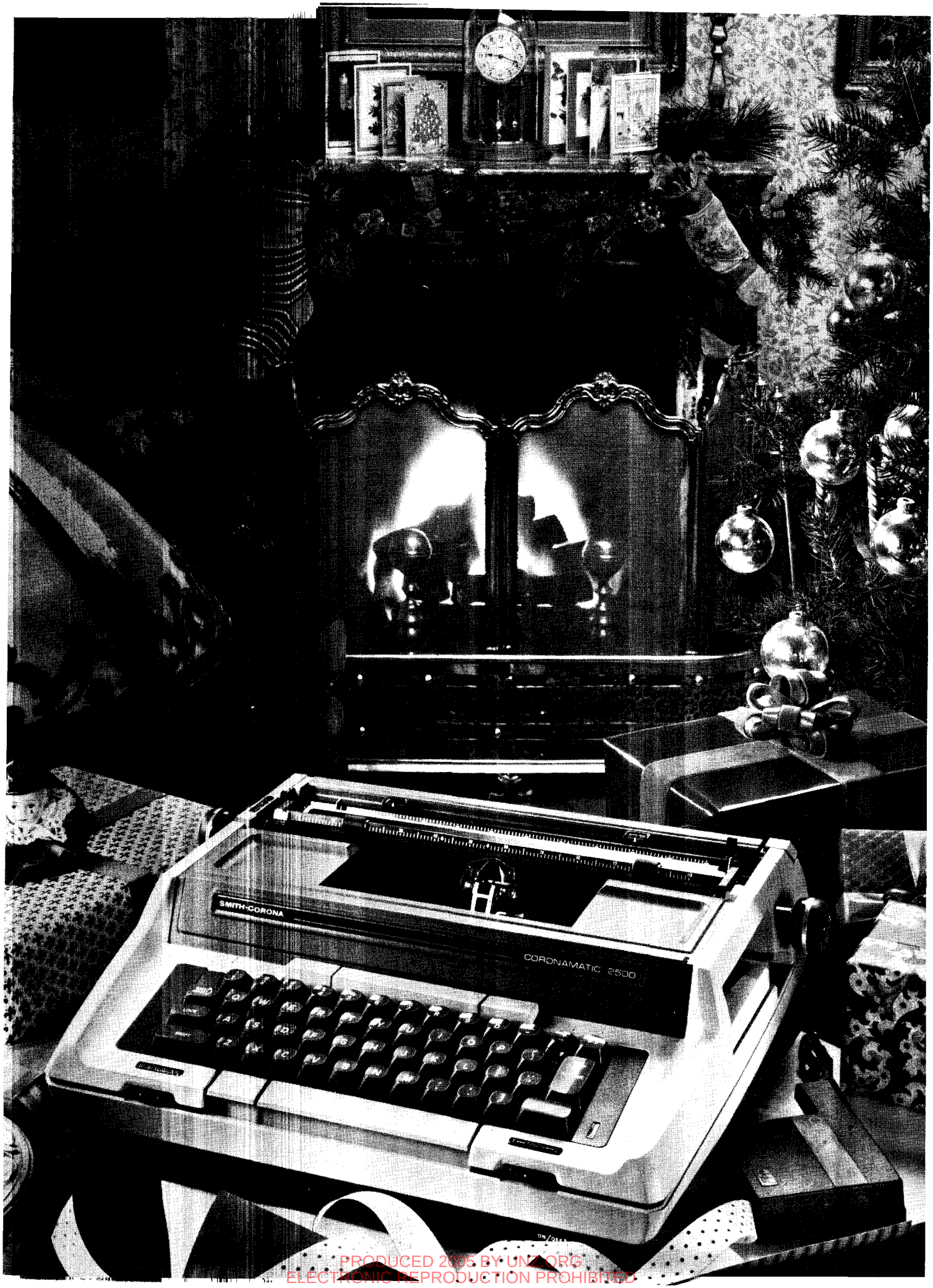

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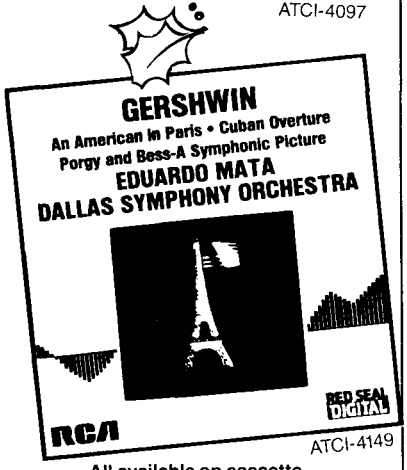

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notice of New York critics by singing leads in operas by Mascagni, Mozart, Robert Ward, and Hans Werner Henze. A combination of standard and contemporary works still characterizes her repertory: She has created roles in operas by Conrad Susa, Carlisle Floyd, and Pasatieri, whom she knew at the Manhattan School. She never sang in a chorus as many of her American contemporaries did. Instead, she got her first breaks by auditioning, armed with glowing reviews from major critics. "But in this business," she says, "word of mouth is perhaps even more important than reviews"—and word of an unusually communicative, hard-working singer preceded her.

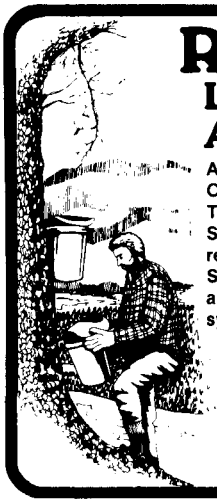
Only two years after her 1972 professional debut, as Nannetta in Verdi's *Falstaff* at Colorado's Central City Opera festival, Malfitano was singing with the New York City Opera and in Europe. She seldom sang small parts, and from the first she worked in major houses. Within five years, during which time she learned five to eight roles a season, she'd made it to Chicago, London, and Salzburg, though she still sang with regional companies in this country. (She still sings with them; coming up are engagements in New Orleans, Fort Worth, and Macon, Georgia.) She made her debut at the Met in 1979 as Gretel. Her first *Traviata* came only as recently as 1979 in Detroit, and by the end of this season she will have sung it more than 60 times, a considerable number of times for any singer to have sung any role in just three years.

Yet Malfitano feels that her Violetta is only a beginning, that she has yet to find the director who is really going to draw her out as an actress, that most of her is untapped. The words she uses most often while talking about being onstage are: yourself, drama, open, frightening, abandonment, difficult, discovery, danger. "The minute you begin to set boundaries and classifications you stifle possibilities none of us can imagine," she says. "Possibilities are what it's all about."

Malfitano never feels that she has completed an interpretation, because her personal investment in her characters prevents her from planning scenes ahead, and because the element of surprise and discovery—about her role, herself, her life—is most important to her. "I'm convinced that the things most singers get hung up by are not problems of technique but emotional blocks. Going inside, finding an emotional commitment to a character—or even to whoever *you* are, God knows—reducing yourself to a vulnerable state and exposing that in front of people.... It's very scary to let yourself feel all this out, because you never know what you're going to find. But this is it, this is what interests me, *this* is my career."

It's rare and reassuring to see a singer, especially one so young, trust her instincts and technique as Malfitano does. There are still rough edges in her *Traviata*, but they are overwhelmed by sheer force of personality, intelligence, and imagination. Catherine Malfitano dares to take the ultimate risk—to open up to us and to herself onstage. Her reward is that she involves and surprises herself, her colleagues, and her audience with the richness and reality of her portrayals. Domingo says he gets from her "everything that I expect in a partner onstage, all the contact I need to move away from the opera singer and just think the character."

To compare any singer with Maria Callas is a dangerous business, but Catherine Malfitano's talents and interests as a singer and actress definitely resemble Callas's. She's a distinctive and daring performer, and her growing presence in the Met's spotlight suggests that she will soon emerge as a major artist. ■



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Thomas H. Middleton

The Third Degree Exposed

Back in June, this column was about graduations, gradations, and degrees, and I meandered to the third degree, that ungentle method of questioning sometimes employed in the back rooms of police stations. H.L. Mencken claims that the expression *the third degree* is derived from Freemasonry, a Master Mason being the same as a third-degree Mason. I questioned his theory, which I believe is nothing more than guesswork. I received a gratifyingly copious flow of mail in response to my conjecture.

Several people connected the third degree with third-degree burns. That feels wrong to me. While the third degree as administered by the police is certainly unpleasant, a third-degree burn is positively hideous, and I don't see *third-degree burns* as a phrase that lends itself to the sort of hyperbolic jocularity we see in expressions where words signifying something truly horrible are used to describe something much less dramatic, such as "Borg *murdered* him in the finals," "He got *crucified* in the debate," and "It was a *massacre*: Yale 82, Columbia 0." I don't think there is any connection between *the third degree* and *third-degree burns*.

However, most of my mail came from Masons, and most of those agreed with Mencken that *the third degree* probably did come from the ritual one has to undergo in order to become a third-degree Mason. They mention a certain amount of hazing and questioning involved with the ritual.

Several letters mentioned, in passing, that "on the level" and "on the square" come from Freemasonry. Allen Cabaniss, who is a research professor emeritus of history, a past Grand Master of Masons in Mississippi, and the author of a booklet called "Freemasonry in Mississippi," sent me a scholarly letter well worth quoting. He says:

> The third (or Master Mason's) degree differs in several ways from the preliminary two (Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft). It is much longer (almost three hours); it is a serious drama (that is, mystery, miracle, or morality play) about the legendary martyrdom of Hiram Abif; and it is the governing degree from which officers of the lodge are selected and on which membership in the Grand Lodge is predicated. Succeeding degrees of Freemasonry in the United States (the York and Scottish rites) are chiefly interpretations, explanations, or expansions of the third degree. It is so crucial to the Masonic system that in the United States, from colonial times to the present, those who possess the degree have tended to tease and badger candidates for it before they receive it. They often say to a candidate, "You *take* the first two degrees, but we *give* you the third degree." Most Grand Lodges frown upon such harmless but sophomoric horse-play, but they find it virtually impossible to suppress. It was the element of mystery and fright thus provoked that caused it to pass, early in this century, into common parlance (as Mencken declared), although there is nothing in the degree itself to warrant such language.

Mencken was wrong! "The third degree" refers to rites of the Knights of Columbus.

I said in my June column that all the Masons I have known *as Masons* have been fun-loving, gentlemanly sorts about whom there was not even the remotest suspicion of the application of rubber hoses to tender spots on a suspect's body. Professor Cabaniss's letter reaffirms my impression.

I still think Mencken was wrong, however, in linking the third degree with Freemasonry, and I got a marvelous letter from a gentleman named Thomas M. Curran, of Auburn, Alabama, that I think nails down the correct etymology. Mr. Curran says:

> I thought everyone knew where *third degree* came from. I was brought up in a suburb of Boston in the 1920s and 1930s. My father was a policeman and my uncle was a truck driver. Both were Knights of Columbus and both were on the "Degree Team." They were Third Degree Knights and they served on the initiation team for new Third Degree Knights.
>
> It was all very mysterious business. They both had small black leather bags which held their regalia and equipment. No one was allowed near the bags, especially not the children. There was always great anticipation of "Degree" nights. There would always be much cryptic joking and sly innuendo: "Oh! Wait till we get that Eddie Foley tonight!" Frequently both would come home with bruises the next morning. Once, my uncle was unable to go to work for a couple of days: It was rumored, hush-hush, that he had been kicked in the groin. But they seemed to enjoy the whole thing.
>
> Evidently "Degree Team" work was for young men; they were out of it by their thirties. They seemed to enjoy giving the "*third degree*" to young Irish bucks, but it became a bit too much for them.
>
> I have always presumed that, since many of the Knights of Columbus were also Irish policemen, giving the *third degree* to someone was just a slang transfer from their ritual work to their official work. And this would be a slang transfer that everyone in the northeast would immediately grasp—except perhaps Mencken.

There is absolutely no question in my mind that Mr. Curran is correct. Police departments today seem to comprise a broad cross-section of our society, but in the first half of this century, the stereotypical Irish cop was a reality. Those strapping boyos must have spent their working hours on the force and much of their leisure with the K. of C. I find it quite astonishing that no Knight of Columbus came forward many years ago to refute Mencken and that the first public clarification would be in *Saturday Review* in the last month of 1981. What Henry L. Mencken lacked was a Thomas M. Curran. ■

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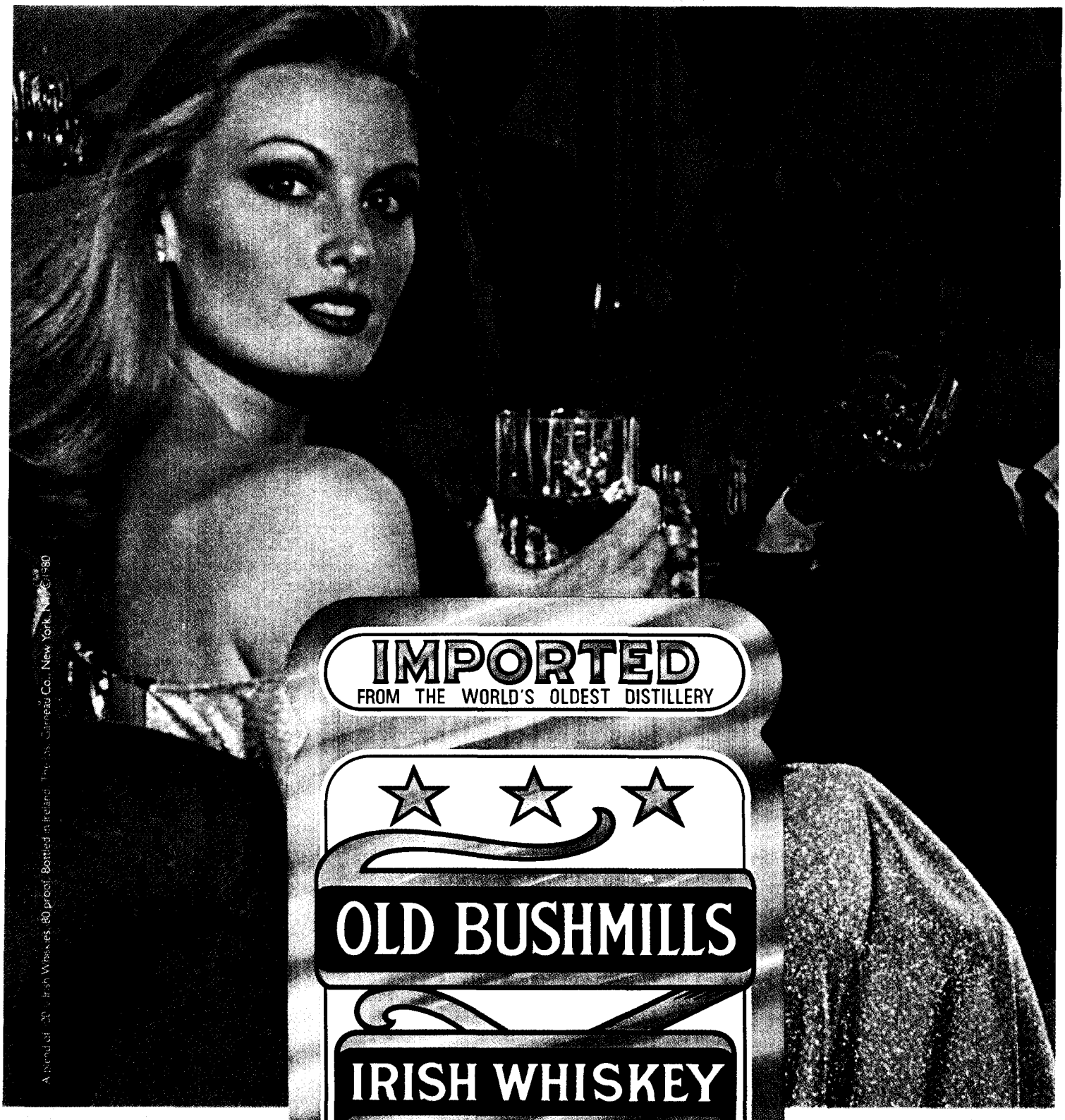

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Irving Kolodin

An Extraordinary Debut

Her name is **Cecile Licad**. At first glance, when she walked on stage for her debut with the New York Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, her slender figure and long dark hair streaming down her back were reminiscent of such diminutive coloratura sopranos as Lily Pons. Licad looked as though she were advancing to sing some soul-searching vocal roulades. But there was a piano, ready, open, and waiting. When she struck its first sound there was no question that she was there to prove that her glowing reputation was not unfounded. At the age of 20, after several obscure recitals and receipt of the Leventritt Gold Medal Award, Licad proved herself capable of extraordinary *instrumental* roulades.

The work she performed was the F minor concerto of Frederic Chopin (published as No. 2, though composed before No. 1). From the authority and assurance with which she proclaimed the instrument's introduction, there was every sound reason to believe that she came from the composer's Poland. But she comes originally from the Philippines and has studied in Philadelphia. At its famous Curtis Institute, she worked with such pianistic tutors as Seymour Lipkin and Mieczyslaw Horszowski before ascending to the rarefied artistic influence of Rudolf Serkin.

At the concert, as Licad surfaced from the introductory plunge into Chopin's challenging waters ahead, it was apparent that she was being partnered exceptionally, like a fellow champion swimmer, by Mehta. It was clear from where I was sitting that Mehta's arms, hands, and head were all expressing approval of the music Licad was drawing from the instrument. Her sound was ringing and sonorous. Her performance was vital and musically vigorous—a full counterpart, in shading and warmth of touch, to the gliding virtuosity for which Chopin's own playing is legendary.

In the Larghetto, Licad added an element of vocalism to her playing. Chopin evolved the deftly embellished, songful, operatic writing in this movement out of his love for the kinds of melodies Vincenzo Bellini poured into *La Sonnambula* and *Norma*. Here, Licad evoked arabesques and arches of phrasing rarely heard from a pianist of any age.

CATHERINE URSILLO

Cecile Licad's playing brought to mind legends of Chopin's own gliding virtuosity.

The finale was a little lower in artistic totality, the Polish master's dance rhythms a little beyond Licad's present pianistic command. But if she had mastered every aspect of music at 20, what would be left for her to attain at 30 or 40?

There were no reservations in the response of the audience, which was mostly on its feet and cheering when Licad came back for a solo bow at the end. This endorsed not only Licad but also the judgment of the Leventritt Foundation. In awarding its prize to Licad, the foundation abandoned its prior practices in which mass competitions had repeatedly failed to produce a satisfactory candidate.

The foundation's alternative to a competition was to concentrate on a well-planned search for a single individual who would, after a methodical exposure to suitably experienced musicians, qualify for what the foundation had to offer: a cash award of $10,000, appearances with a dozen orchestras around the world (of which the New York Philharmonic was the first), and a CBS recording contract. Is the result a dream come true for Licad and her musician-parents in Manila? Well, she is herself a dream of competence, ready to fulfill the demanding commitments the Leventritt Foundation has to offer.

At the same concert, Mehta not only excelled at musical partnership but also sponsored a contemporary work of more than casual quality. That was the **Requiem for Survivors** by German-born Gerhard Samuel, who was once Mehta's assistant conductor in Los Angeles, has also served as music director of the Oakland Symphony, and is now associated with the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music.

This expressive work, prompted by the death of a close friend, Scott Runyon, has a subtle, possessive *modus descendi*. Beginning with a single barren chord, Samuel has evolved his music out of the thematic substance of the "Lacrimosa" in Mozart's *Requiem*. From it, he has composed a series of elaborations (variations would be too strictly academic a term). The sequence proceeds from a stabbing incision of the body *musica*, which seems to gush tonal blood, to a transforming purity of sound, ending with a recollection of the opening chord.

For this performance, Mehta had the orchestra reseated with the violas (rather than the cellos) to his right. This added to the sweetly transparent sound he now evokes from the players, which was to the advantage not only of Samuel and Chopin, but also of Mozart, whose C major ("Jupiter") symphony spun out a reminder of the opening atmosphere of Samuel's *Requiem*. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann

Dickens Comes Home

MARTHA SWOPE

Nicholas Nickleby (Roger Rees, extreme right) and Smike (David Threlfall, standing center) join the Vincent Crummles theater troupe in a celebration after their debuts as actors.

Almost any comment about **Nicholas Nickleby** is true. This Royal Shakespeare Company production, eight and a half hours long, with 43 actors playing 143 parts, is so multifarious that it embraces contradictions. The show has sags, yet length is of its essence; it sometimes follows Dickens too faithfully, yet it sometimes distorts him; and so on. All these contradictory truths support a central truth: The production insistently *exists*. In some degree its contradictions are less artistic faults—with one howling exception, noted below—than the contradictions we would expect within any living organism.

What first struck this American viewer was that *Nicholas Nickleby* is a company effort by a subsidized theater. No U.S. producer could contemplate a show of this length, with 13 musicians and hundreds of costumes, a show whose cast had done eight weeks of preparatory work before regular rehearsals began or a script was written, a show that requires physical renovation of a theater where it plays. (Two-tiered towers stand downstage right and left, connected by a runway around the front of the mezzanine.) The tickets are $100, but they would have had to be twice as much, I'd suppose, without the head start provided by subsidy. British taxpayers helped to make this show available to Americans.

Another fruit of subsidy is that this is a *company* work, done by actors who have been maintained as a group. The show was instigated by the directors, Trevor Nunn and John Caird, and the script was finalized by David Edgar, but the groundwork was done through improvisations and experiments by actors who had been working with one another for varying lengths of time. The spirit of ensemble is emphasized by the opening and closing of the two main sections; the entire company comes together on stage, as for a photograph. "This," they seem to say, "is *our* show."

In Dickens's novel, published in 1839, the hero and his sister, after their father's death, go from Devon to London with their mother to seek the help of their uncle, Ralph Nickleby. Uncle Ralph coldly finds hard jobs for the 19-year-old youth and his sister; and their pursuit of livelihood and happiness—thrust out of the shelter of a loving home into a brass-bound world—is the substance of a somewhat tacked-together plot. But in the RSC version, both the ensemble playing and some outstanding performances (another contradiction!) give the work considerable unity. Roger Rees is so fine as Nicholas that it's impossible to imagine the show without him. He is dark, lithe, sensitive—a perfect Dickens hero, innocent without being stupid, strong with a delicate strength. John Woodvine, as Ralph, is chilling granite, a man transmuted to rock by hard circumstance. Edward Petherbridge is his sodden clerk, Newman Noggs, a fallen gentleman and a walking social history, touched with charming rue. Bob Peck, who doubles as the hearty Yorkshire farmer John Browdie and the viciously insatiable Sir Mulberry Hawk, is magnificent in both. Most of the acting is at least good, occasionally sparkling. If I have reservations about Smike, the hero's pathetic friend, rescued by Nicholas from a wretched existence, it's not because of David Threlfall's acting but because the production drastically alters Smike from Dickens's skinny, lame boy into a complete grotesque. How could Vincent Crummles, the actor-manager who engages Nicholas for his troupe, possibly also have engaged this Smike?

Which brings me to the one dreadful blotch. After Nicholas and Smike have, in their adventures, met Crummles and been engaged by him, the Crummles

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company performs *Romeo and Juliet* with Nicholas as Romeo and Smike as the Apothecary. Dickens gives this performance one brief paragraph, saying only that both Nicholas and Smike were well received. The RSC inflates this paragraph into a very long, platitudinous mockery of a bad performance, with which they end Part One of their own show. No doubt the Crummles company would have been shoddy or worse, but we are not given a shoddy performance; we see an undergraduate parody of what ignorant amateurs imagine ham acting to be. Nicholas, with no experience whatsoever, could not possibly have been a good Romeo, but neither would he have behaved like a jackass, as this Romeo does.

I've never understood why actors like to ridicule blatantly the actors of the past instead of trying to understand a bygone style so that they can parody it intelligently. The RSC has committed this offense before, in their production of Boucicault's *London Assurance* (1974).

But overriding this facile vulgarity and some lesser flaws, the RSC tumbles a teeming Dickens world across the stage. More important, beneath the pleasures of the proceedings, a basic cultural link is completed. That link begins with the warm affinity between Dickens and the theater, which he loved, often refers to, sometimes employs (as he did with the Crummles troupe), and frequently uses for models of scene construction. And what was the theatrical genre that Dickens was particularly fond of? Melodrama, of course. We all know this; still, during this performance, I could hardly believe that the audience, on Broadway in 1981, was watching intently while, for example, a lecherous nobleman tried to seduce an honest working girl or an old crone cackled about secret documents. In a revival of any 1839 melodrama, such moments would now be something more than risible; here the audience, myself included, was held. Partly it was awe of the Dickens name, I guess, but awe alone couldn't have done it. Other factors helped—provided a context for those melodramatic moments.

First, the humor. We see the melodrama against the humor surrounding it, and we're persuaded that the man who saw life's ridiculousness so sharply can be trusted here. (Chesterton said that the serious thing in Dickens is his humor; such truth as there is in that comment helps us to accept the lurid passages.) Second, the details of dailyness, the family life, the doing of jobs in millinery shops and business offices, and more. (That's why length is essential to this show—we need the texture.) This dailyness is treated with such intimacy and conviction that it gives the melodramatic material a plentiful ballast of credibility.

Yet something crowns these elements, I believe. *All* of Dickens, the melodrama, the humor, the daily detail, even the narrative and descriptive passages—*all* are theater. Robert Garis illuminates this in his book, *The Dickens Theater*: "Dickens is a performing artist, displaying his verbal skills... in a theater created by the insistent and self-displaying rhetoric of his voice." The RSC seems to have recognized this truth—that, fundamentally, what they are performing is *Dickens,* not *Nicholas Nickleby*. They include, happily, more of the narration and description than is absolutely necessary, assigning parts of passages to actors stationed around the playing areas or, in a most memorable moment, having a large group speak in unison the wonderful description of London as Nicholas and Smike return to it.

I could hardly believe that the audience—myself included—was so gripped by melodrama.

So what we are seeing, aesthetically, is the closing of a link. Dickens fed on popular theater, absorbed it into his very voice as well as into what that voice expressed; and now the RSC is bringing Dickens back to his source. This is hardly the first time that Dickens has been staged; *Nicholas Nickleby* itself was being performed in part while it was still being serialized, before its book publication. But the magnitude (in several senses) of this production, the intent to return to the theater a genius's transformation of the theater, combine to make this production a unique cultural arc.

The production's final gesture—amidst the general happiness, Nicholas lifts another starving boy in his arms for the audience to see—attempts to conclude the whole event as a radicalizing social drama; but that gesture cannot prevail against what has been happening for eight and a half hours. The essence of melodrama is affirmation; no matter what troubles have been undergone, at the last, melodrama shows us justice being done. The greatness of Dickens is that he exalted the genre from popular escapism into a universally affecting myth, touching and ironic at one end of the intellectual spectrum, consoling at the other. It is the universality of this exalted melodrama that the RSC lavishes on us. ■

MARTHA SWOPE

***Nicholas Nickleby*'s one dreadful blotch: Its final scene from *Romeo and Juliet* is an undergraduate parody of what ignorant amateurs imagine ham acting to be.**

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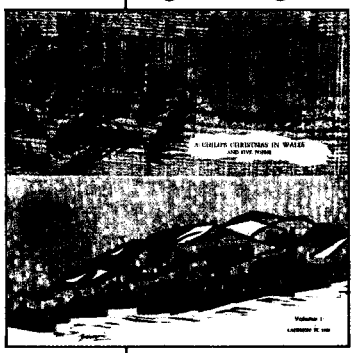
Stephen Wadsworth

'Tis the Season...

Though only the first of its three parts celebrates the coming of Christ, Handel's **Messiah** is considered Christmasy. While it can be argued that any celebration of Christ's coming must also be a celebration of his going, I nevertheless find the clangor of "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible" as incongruous at Christmas as Easter eggs. But for a profound and joyous reflection on the life of Christ, *Messiah* is hard to beat. Charles Jennens, who conceived the work, created a vibrant spiritual narrative by piecing together biblical fragments; Handel, who had been writing for the stage for more than 35 years, created an involving music drama completely without the benefit of identifiable characters, much as Bach did in his Passions. A contemporary critic lauded in *Messiah* "the Sublime, the Grand, the Tender."



Christmasy manipulation of *Messiah*'s greatest hits has separated its music from its drama. Charles Mackerras's recording (3-Angel S-3705, $29.98)—in which soloists like Janet Baker and Robert Tear improvise their own ornaments—remedies that. It is deeply felt and dramatic, and it captures the sublime, the grand, and the tender. Christopher Hogwood's version (3-L'Oiseau-Lyre D189D3*, $32.94), the first recorded *Messiah* played on period instruments, is long on style and musical charm, sublimely tender—the fresh-voiced singers sound as if they're telling the story for the first time—but not grand.

If you want to give *Messiah* a rest this year, or even if you don't, listen to another Jennens-Handel masterpiece, **Belshazzar**. Belshazzar's feast, a sacrilegious affair interrupted by the writing on the wall, is hardly dinner with the Cratchits, but this work earns its Christmas stripes by probing a crisis of faith as trenchantly as any music drama I know. The pillar of faith is Nitocris, Belshazzar's proud mother who passionately disdains her son's rank impiety, comforted by the wisdom of the prophet Daniel. The young soprano Felicity Palmer—a brilliant Handelian—portrays Nitocris with thrilling tone, incisive diction, and razor-sharp rhythmic attack: She is the gem of Nikolaus Harnoncourt's superb *Belshazzar* recording (4-Telefunken 4635326, $43.92).

Daniel becomes the pillar of faith in an earlier depiction of Belshazzar's feast, the 12th-century liturgical pageant **The Play of Daniel**, which also finds its hero dealing with King Darius and the lions. After an enactment of Daniel's travails, the pageant suddenly gets Christmasy when, during Daniel's prophecy of a Messiah, an angel appears to confirm his forecast. The music is Gregorian chant set free and added to, and by the time the Landini Consort, with its nakers, tabors, and shawms, has joined the voices of Pro Cantione Antiqua, with its smooth blend and patrician style, we have a real medieval opera combining the best of the liturgical and secular worlds (Argo ZRG 900*, $10.98). If this combination appeals to you, Nonesuch has several entertaining collections of merrye olde Yule carols, each replete with shawm. If you don't like your Gregorian chant added to, New York's Schola Antiqua does well by a **Gregorian Mass for Christmas Day** (Nonesuch H-71348, $5.98).

There are many fine Christmas works in the liturgical tradition. All of the generally available recordings of Bach's **Christmas Oratorio** are good, and if the six cantatas that make up this piece aren't enough, the re-release of Karl Richter's performances of 14 **Advent and Christmas cantatas** (6-Archiv 2722005, $48.08) is a godsend and a bargain. The soloists have names like Mathis, Schreier, and Fischer-Dieskau, so all is well.

Of the traditional Christmas shows in a secular vein, I prize Berlioz's **L'Enfance du Christ** for its utter lack of sentimentality or melodrama. In a series of simple vignettes Berlioz shows us the characters of the Christmas story first-hand, and his exquisite scoring and gentle melodies paint them with the utmost delicacy. Berlioz, unfettered by any religious bias, depicts King Herod in his torment as sympathetically as he does the Virgin Mary in her flight to Egypt. Though the London Symphony is the star of Colin Davis's recording (2-Philips 6700106*, $21.96), Jules Bastin is a moving Herod and Janet Baker a Mary of great inner strength.

In Philips's notes, David Cairns writes of Berlioz during the gestation of *L'Enfance*, "The intensity of remembered feeling was such that, in composing the work, he could momentarily reenter a world in which the personages and events of the Christmas story, as they first stamped themselves on [his mind]...were once again vibrantly alive." Isn't this the standard for what any of us sees, hears, or feels as being Christmasy?

I have no feeling, remembered or otherwise, for Christmas music that has no religious content (i.e. "White Christmas" or "I'll Be Home for Christmas"), and while there are many carols I love, I love none of them in the soupy over-arrangements typical of many superstar Christmas albums. Renata Scotto, Placido Domingo, Jean-Pierre Rampal, the Canadian Brass, and the Boston Pops have all added theirs to the pile this year. Domingo, Rampal, and both instrumen-

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tal groups can be counted on for beautiful sound and superior musicianship, but their programs are brazenly commercial. Scotto makes a less attractive sound, and her arrangements are strictly department store.

Elly Ameling's new recital of Christmas art songs, including Cornelius's lovely *Weihnachtslieder*, is clearly motivated by artistry, not P.R., and it's marvelous (CBS M 36677*, $8.98). Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Luciano Pavarotti have each produced tasteful, restrained **Christmas albums**, but the greatest of the bunch is Leontyne Price's (London OS 25280, $10.98). How many singers can get Herbert von Karajan and the Vienna Philharmonic to vamp until ready? Price's "O Holy Night" is an epiphany in itself, and her a cappella performance of the spiritual "Sweet Little Jesus Boy" is radiant.

On Christmas Eve at King's College Chapel in Cambridge, England, readings of nine lessons from the Bible (some of them common to Handel's *Messiah*) interspersed with nine carols tell the Christmas story. In this enchanted ritual, many standard carols have a meaning they lose when piped into elevators. The 1958 service with the celebrated **King's College Choir** is immortalized on disc. (Argo ZRG 5190, $10.98).

Much as Jennens did with scriptural texts for Handel, the late Roland Hayes strung 13 spirituals together into a cycle called **The Life of Christ** to make a sort of Afro-American *Messiah*. There are also echoes here of Schubert's bleak song-cycle *Die Winterreise*. Hayes's singing of *The Life of Christ*, which has the naive purity of *L'Enfance du Christ* and the grandeur of the grandest Hallelujah chorus, is a revelation of spirit (Vanguard SRV 352, $5.98).

Perhaps the most musical of Christmas records contains no music as such. The poet Dylan Thomas's reading of his story **A Child's Christmas in Wales** is a religious experience even though it's mostly about snowballs, presents, drunken aunts, and other temporal accouterments of Christmas (Caedmon TC 1002, $8.98). His voice rivals Hayes's, Price's, Baker's, and the whole of Pro Cantione Antiqua for dynamic range and sheer expressiveness. The language alone is so rich and suggestive that it is hard to escape that "intensity of remembered feeling" that Cairns recognizes in Berlioz—Christmas comes alive again, whatever it means to you. ■

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Judith Crist

Dazzling "Ragtime"

Ragtime is a dazzler. It is Milos Forman's *Ragtime*, but it is a triumph for everyone involved in bringing E.L. Doctorow's neoclassical novel to the screen (see page 14).

Doctorow's re-creation of pre-World War I America as a crazy-quilt of fact and fiction, of near-cartoon characters and historic or pop personalities, of nostalgic detail and bitter truth, has been honed to the sight and sound of film. But the rhythms and the syncopation, the intertwining of themes, and the purity of concept have been retained in this recall of an era when anything was possible and innocence was lost.

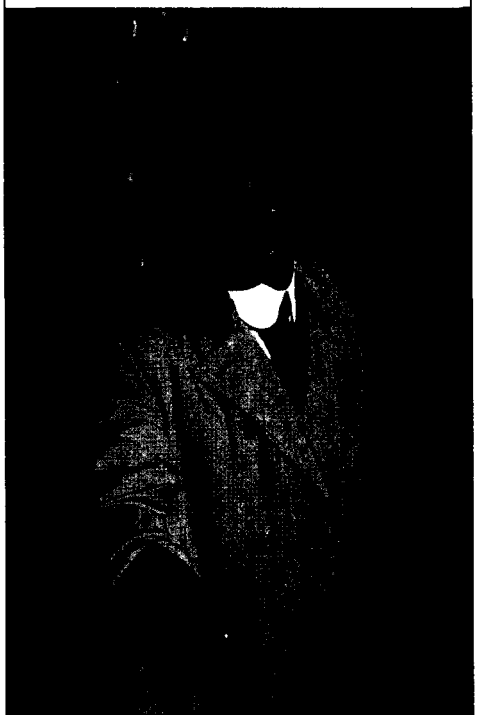
Forman and Michael Weller, the gifted playwright with whom he collaborated on *Hair* in 1979, have retained the plot structure of the novel and as much of its detail as is possible in a two-and-a-half-hour film. The lives of three families are mingled in melodrama and minor incident against a variety of backgrounds overwhelming in their lavish detail and complementary designs. The incredible acquires credibility, the actualities border on absurdity, and the involvement is instant in the design, tempo, and creative imagination of the filmmakers.

It is the 1906 nickelodeon newsreel, with its piano accompaniment, that provides us with the "history." The pianist's hands are those of Coalhouse Walker Jr., the black man who will touch the lives of all and who, in the film, provides the focal point and final melodrama. Booker T. Washington dines with Teddy Roosevelt at the White House, and Harry K. Thaw denies that his wife, Evelyn Nesbit, posed for the nude statue Stanford White created as a topper for the new Madison Square Garden. There is a violent confrontation between Thaw and White, under the benign eye of New York Police Commissioner Rheinlander Waldo.

The stage is set for scandal—but we cut to New Rochelle, where an Edwardian family is at its Sunday-dinner ritual, Father making the conversation, Mother murmuring, her Younger Brother rewarded for his efforts in the family fireworks business by being asked to say grace, Grandfather and Little Boy silent onlookers. And suddenly screams—the maid has found a brown-skinned baby in the vegetable garden. This is a Christian and compassionate household, the compassion flowing from the meek and mild Mother: The baby and its mother, found lurking nearby, are taken in.

"Ragtime" honors the Doctorow novel—as well as the director and screenwriter.

Stanford White has been murdered; Thaw is on trial; the exquisite Evelyn Nesbit is being suborned to perjury with promises of a million dollars; Henry Ford has installed his production line for the Model T; and immigration is at a high. Evelyn is caught in a traffic jam on the lower East Side and encounters Tateh, the Jewish immigrant selling his cutout silhouettes on the sidewalk, his small daughter leashed to his leg ("kidnappers" are rampant), just as his wife's adultery erupts into a ferocious public disgrace. Meanwhile, Younger Brother has been smitten by Evelyn and is on her trail; Coalhouse has become a successful Harlem band pianist and is reclaiming the foundling and its mother as his family; Tateh takes the road West with his daughter.



Howard Rollins as Coalhouse Walker Jr., pianist turned terrorist, in *Ragtime*.

We are, as Houdini's feats remind us, in an age of possibilities and of grim realities, where Younger Brother can become Nesbit's lover and, when scorned, turn his frustrations to violent righteousness; when a black man who refuses to "learn to be a nigger" can do little more than make a fleeting mark on a white world; when a peddler can become an ersatz baron and a moviemaker and ride off toward the sunset with the woman—and children—of his heart. But the Edwardian family is doomed; Father is out of his time, with integrity found in unexpected quarters and honor too often absent in high places.

Forman has assembled a remarkably fine cast and evoked its finest efforts. Mary Steenburgen's lovely and gentle Mother gets her womanly way; James Olson's Father is the victim of his own rationality and fairness; Brad Dourif's Younger Brother is wonderfully young in passion and principle; Elizabeth McGovern's Evelyn is pure childlike enchantress with the heart of a whore; and Mandy Patinkin's Tateh makes his mark in a role that has been justifiably diminished from its prominence in the novel. But it is Howard E. Rollins, among these non-household-name actors, who stands out, his Coalhouse a man of joy, of anger, of memorable stature in righteous wrath and personal sorrow, complemented by

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Kenneth McMillan as Doctorow's "craven and miserable" Willie Conklin, the "ordinary" bigot.

Another of Forman's major achievements is his use of stars, with, of course, James Cagney leading all the rest as the police commissioner. At 82, Cagney is nothing short of superb in his control of the shrewd, beady-eyed lawman facing practicalities in directing the siege of J.P. Morgan's library, which Coalhouse and his gang have taken over for their last terrorist stand. Moses Gunn provides some stunning moments as Booker T. Washington attempting to negotiate with Coalhouse; Norman Mailer is on hand as Stanford White; Pat O'Brien is Thaw's lawyer; and Donald O'Connor is both a revue star and Evelyn's dance instructor. But Forman has avoided the "hey there!" syndrome for star spotters: The familiar and unknown players blend beautifully, and only the cast listing will tell you, for example, that it's Bessie Love in a delicious bit as a proper householder whose home has been taken over for the police siege.

There are many such bits (these are, of course, Forman's hallmark) as the director plumbs the richness of the film's backgrounds with Miroslav Ondricek's crystal-clear cinematography and Randy Newman's charming score. The film cost more than $30 million and looks it, from the lavish costumes to the teeming sets of the lower East Side, the Morgan library terrain, Madison Square Garden, bourgeois homes and rich apartments, and Atlantic City in its sun-soaked resort heyday.

Of course there have been omissions: Emma Goldman is the major Doctorow character to be eliminated, along with her wisdom; Sigmund Freud and J.P. Morgan never show up—and World War I is a sudden headline. But Forman's and Weller's creativity compensates us, an escape from the library and Evelyn as movie star among their pleasing inventions. Their film honors its source—and honors them.

Small doubt from the start that **On Golden Pond** would be an extraordinary and irresistible film. And it is.

Taken from the top, it co-stars Katharine Hepburn, Henry Fonda, and Jane Fonda, three professionals who have yet to falter. It is directed by Mark Rydell, whose distinction has been the evocation of remarkable performances from tried and untried actors alike. It is derived by Ernest Thompson from his own play that ran on Broadway for 378 performances in 1979-80. And it is produced by Bruce Gilbert, whose credits include *Coming Home, The China Syndrome*, and *Nine to Five*. Pretty good for starters.

But what is so rare as high expectations not only fulfilled but also exceeded? Thompson's dark and deeply affecting comedy about family life and death emerges as an exquisite film aglow with tender appreciation of human frailty, of physical change in man and nature, and of the weaknesses and strengths of age. In dealing with the elderly, the film provides an illumination for the young, a catharsis for the no-longer young, and a reassurance for us all.

Henry Fonda and Katharine Hepburn as septuagenarians coming to terms with life and death in Mark Rydell's movie of Ernest Thompson's hit, *On Golden Pond*.

The story is simple: Ethel and Norman Thayer arrive for their 48th summer on Golden Pond in New Hampshire, reopen their cottage, and plan in the course of the season to celebrate Norman's 80th birthday. Unexpectedly, their disaffected and unhappy daughter arrives for the occasion with her fiancé and his 13-year-old son. The two leave the boy behind while they go on to Europe and pick him up several weeks later for their return to California. Summer is over and the Thayers close up the cottage.

It is the very simplicity of plot that is the film's strength, for this is an exploration of people. On Broadway, Frances Sternhagen and Tom Aldredge were excellent as the elderly couple, but there is a magical personalization in the film, with Hepburn, at 74, and Fonda, at 76, taking the characters onto their own personas so they emerge as familiar lifetime acquaintances. Norman, the retired academic, quirky, affectionate, and witty, has always had an awareness of death, a dry humor as it approaches; he role-plays the cantankerous codger, feeling the life juices solidify, his terrors apparent under the crusty veneer. Ethel, vigorous, buoyant, is all-understanding and, at moments, tartly impatient, clinging to middle-agedness. "People don't live to 150," Norman tells her, "you're old and I'm ancient!"

It is with the second and third generations that the Thayers reveal themselves and, in a heart-stopping moment of crisis, their attitudes cross: She gains an acceptance of death, he renews his willingness to live the life that remains.

Hepburn and Fonda are so fascinating that the other actors at first seem, as they did on stage, to be theatrical devices and straightmen. Not so for long or in retrospect. Just as Thompson has opened out the play to the exhilaration of the outdoors, Rydell has evoked more from the secondary characters. In her few brief scenes Jane Fonda makes clear her growth from a grudge-nurturing child to a woman who is approaching contentment; Dabney Coleman gives the dentist-fiancé an edge of character and presence; Doug McKeon makes the transition from smart-ass child of divorce to open-hearted youngster with subtlety and appealing naiveté; and William Lanteau makes the mailman understandably the daughter's erstwhile summer suitor.

New Hampshire has never looked lovelier than through Billy Williams's camera eye—a fitting setting for the sharing of the gifts of fine actors and the truths of our lives. ■

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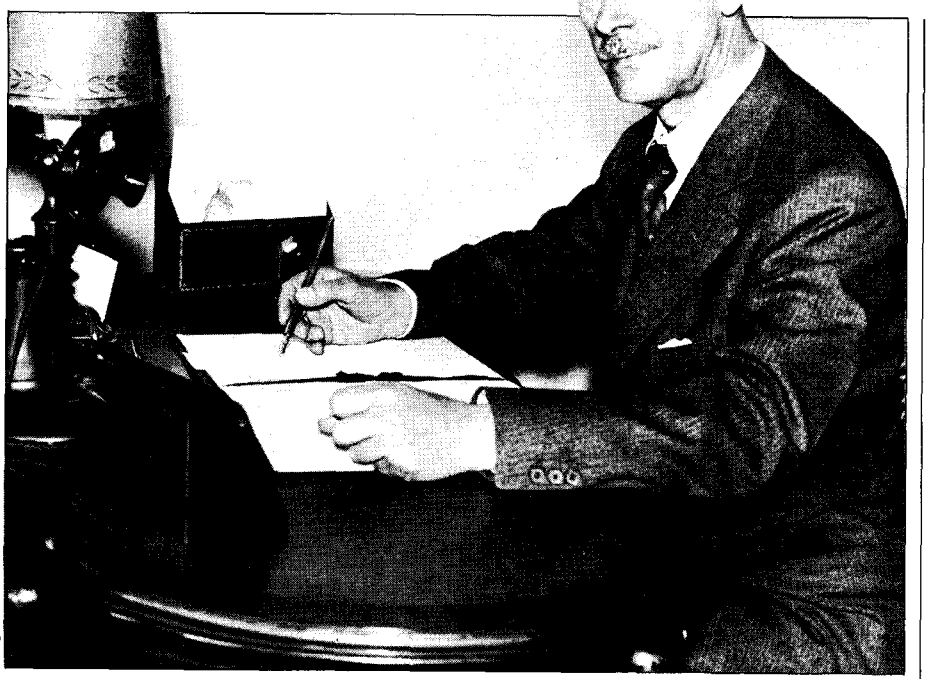


UPI

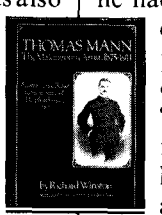
Mann: The most Prussian of writers and yet anti-German in many important ways.

The Double Life of Thomas Mann

Thomas Mann: The Making of an Artist, 1875-1911
by Richard Winston, Alfred A. Knopf, 319 pp., $17.95

Reviewed by Alfred Kazin

THOMAS MANN was not just one of the greatest writers of our time; he was also one of its luckiest, most honored, best rewarded—and stuffiest. He was the most famous German novelist of the century, and as he said with typical modesty and accuracy when his famous first novel, *Buddenbrooks*, was published in 1900 (he was 25), he alone brought the German novel into world literature.



Mann was fortunately out of Germany when Hitler came to power, and he had a Jewish wife. No other writer did so well in exile. His American publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, doted on him. Knopf even called him "Tommy," which you may be sure no one else ever did. Although his heavy-footed English sounded like a reproach to his listeners for not understanding German, Mann became an important asset here in World War II. First from Princeton, then from Pacific Palisades, his writings and broadcasts against Nazism added to the authority of his novels, made him an example of the truly good German at a time when his countrymen were enthusiastically burning his books and gassing people. It was in America that the already towering author of *The Magic Mountain* went on to perhaps his most significant work—the tetralogy *Joseph and His Brothers*. The complicated often profound *Doctor Faustus*, although not readily admired here, was a penetrating allegory both of the "superior" artist (like Thomas Mann) and Germany's own pact with the devil. Mann wrote me that he was astonished that the book elicited "so many yawns."

From 1900 to his death in Switzerland at 80, Mann had a remarkably sustained and ever more productive career. He never lacked for money, he easily acquired and kept a large audience in and out of Germany and, of course, he had all the honors from the Nobel Prize (1929) down. Stiff and even rigid in public, deftly ironic about his importance without ever forgetting it, he had the impressive total dignity vainly sought by such problem cases as Kafka, Joyce, Proust, Woolf. I once sat with him at a private screening in Hollywood (he loved movies), and even there he looked like a German field marshal who did not relax in public.

Yet this immensely dignified personage, born into a wealthy North German merchant family whose decline he so unforgettably detailed in *Buddenbrooks*, this devoted husband and father of six children wrote the most famous story in modern times of homosexual attraction, *Death in Venice*. Mann claimed that for Gustav von Aschenbach—the much honored and haughtily solitary man of letters who dies of cholera in Venice because he is too obsessed with a Polish boy seen playing on the beach to leave the plague-ridden city—he borrowed some traits from the composer Gustav Mahler. He borrowed even more from his own public persona and the fascination with prepubescent boys that appears in several early stories. And if *Buddenbrooks* was about "decline," Mann's most famous novel, *The Magic Mountain*, was about sickness and the catastrophe looming over Western civilization just before 1914. His long preoccupation with sickness, morbidity, and death was to come to some sort of crisis with *Doctor Faustus*—a work too much about the "German sickness" to be easily under-

Alfred Kazin, distinguished professor of English at the City University of New York Graduate Center and Hunter College, is working on *An American Procession*, a book about American writers from Emerson to T.S. Eliot.

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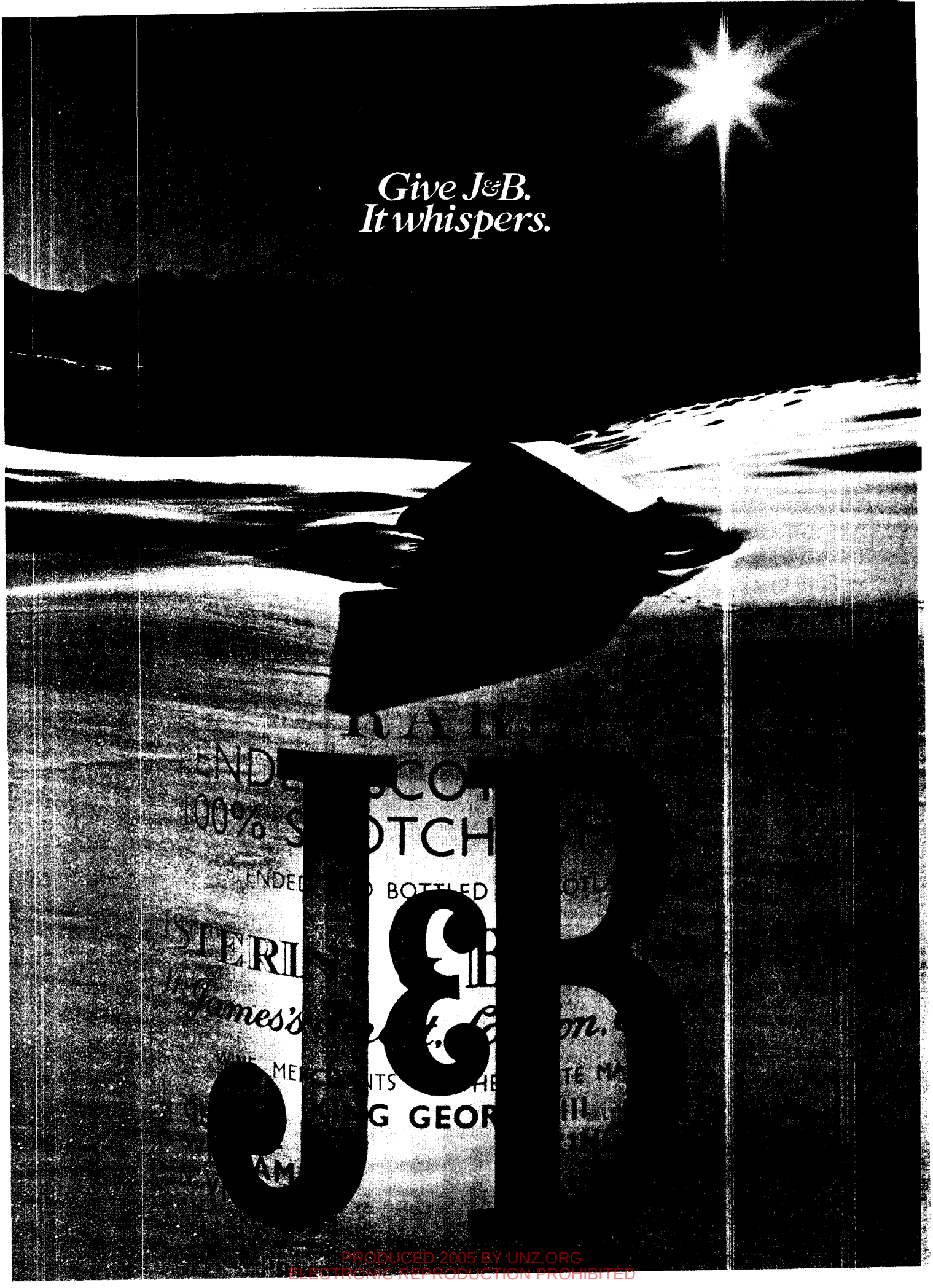

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stood in other countries, and too close to German guilt to be welcome in Germany. Clearly, Mann was the most Prussian of writers and yet anti-German in many important particulars, stuffy *and* ironic at the same time, a paradox of personality, and one who drew some of his best work from his own doubleness.

It is a pity indeed that the late Richard Winston was able to carry this excellent, wonderfully clear-headed biography only up to 1911 and the inception of *Death in Venice.* Winston, who with his wife, Clara, translated so many German works, combined the necessary admiration for Mann's work along with the necessary detachment about his many-sided personality. Winston had no doubt of Mann's importance, and he understood, as many detractors of Mann today do not, that Mann was one of the last great figures in our time because he kept up unlimited admiration for the novel as a form, unweariedly believed in literature as the highest representation of experience. Mann is too often dismissed as "ponderous" by people who, lacking Mann's faith in literature, miss the variety of effects he could achieve. Winston valued Mann's many-sided subtleties as a writer. That is essential to any appreciation of Mann's enduring art. And Winston had the necessary information, drawing from many sources in Europe and America, to back this appreciation with insightful personal notes. Winston's death in 1980 prevented this valuable book from becoming the first full-length biography in English.

Against Mann's awesome devotion to literature and the sometimes awesome personal manner that went with it, Winston presents the rebellious, exotic, skeptical, often sickly Thomas Mann—characteristics that were to make him so subtle and even comic about the pomposities of other people. The famous doubleness of Thomas Mann began in the contrast between his father and mother in the ancient Hanseatic city of Lübeck on the Baltic. Senator Heinrich Mann was a merchant prince and tax official from one of the best established families in town. The mother, Julia da Silva-Bruhns, was Brazilian-born, partly Portuguese and Creole. Her exotic origins never ceased to fascinate Thomas and his elder brother, the writer Heinrich Mann.

In story after story, especially "Tonio Kröger," Thomas Mann explored—and exploited—the theme of his hidden "foreignness" in starchy, conventional Lübeck. The young Thomas was a poor and inattentive student, refused to enter his father's business, never properly enrolled in a university. Though no one ever looked or acted less like a bohemian, Thomas was soon (on his father's money) attracted to a wandering life, Italy, and the "decadent" literary and art circles of Munich in the 1890s. Munich, at the southern end of Germany, was as urban, Catholic, "emancipated," and artistic as Lübeck was stiffly Lutheran, traditionalist, and family-minded.

The Mann family firm dissolved when sons Thomas and Heinrich went their own way in literature. The heartbroken father died after reprimanding Heinrich in his will. "I am a neurasthenic," Heinrich was to say, "that is my profession and my fate." Heinrich, four years older than Thomas, is now remembered—at least in the outside world—for the novel from which the film *The Blue Angel* was made with Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings. Heinrich, though in public as cold and unyielding as Thomas, was inherently different—and much less talented. Politically an advanced liberal and a great Francophile, he wrote impatiently and published excessively, favored sexy themes, and was all too aware that his reputation differed from his brother's. Thomas, from being the younger brother, went on to become *the* internationally acclaimed Mann. Yet though he privately wrote that Heinrich's novels were "bad," he was often jealous of Heinrich. He was easily exasperated by his brother, but often defended him. (As boys sharing the same room they did not speak for a year.) Thomas—naturally—turned the rivalry between the brothers into a fascination with siblings, twins, and family rivalries of all sorts.

Thomas Mann developed into an extraordinarily confident, poised writer who despite his laughing disclaimers and deft ironies notoriously thought of himself as occupying for Germans something like Goethe's authority. The Imperial Germany of Wilhelm II lent itself to this kind of self-importance. Mann never ceased to benefit from the *hoch* bourgeois status provided him by his father's family wealth and position in Lübeck. It was typical of the period that young Germans with *Bildung* (education and culture) got away with a year's service in the German army; others had to serve two. Mann also benefited—and thoroughly relished—his exceptional position as a *novelist* in a culture whose heroes were poets, philosophers, composers. He was good at manipulating writers into his personal claque, angrily rejected criticism. Even in America he kept up his lifelong practice of public readings from his work in order (like Dickens) to bind an audience more firmly to himself.

It was typical of Mann's subtle alienation from German conventionality and its already marked obsession with "race purity" that he married the daughter of a wealthy, thoroughly assimilated Jewish professor, Alfred Pringsheim. It was also thoroughly "German" of Mann to say of his wife's family: "Not a suggestion of Jewishness arises in connection with these people; one is aware of nothing but culture."

These persistent traits of irony and mockery were deeply woven into Mann's great creative work. Mann said of *Death in Venice* that the meaning of the passion described there was really "confusion and a stripping of dignity." Himself often psychosomatically ill, he was fascinated all his creative life with sickness as a form of withdrawal and with death as the resolution of a culture that proud Germans thought would last forever. No one understood better than Mann how easily whole cultures—not just families—can die. As Germans have observed better than anyone else, "civilization" may be just pretense. The tubercular Hans Castorp in *The Magic Mountain* has to become ill and withdraw to a sanatorium on a mountaintop in order to recognize that life in the valley below is not what it seems.

No one but Mann in the long agony of the Hitler years could have occupied himself with a magnificent fiction woven out of the biblical Joseph. Probably no other writer has turned the Bible to such imaginative, opulently mythical yet witty use. Perhaps the publicly stuffy Mann was also a creation. As a writer he was endlessly resourceful and *solid.* He endures. ■

He was fascinated with sickness as a form of withdrawal and with death as the resolution of a culture that proud Germans thought would last forever.

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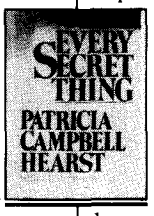
Patty Hearst Tells All

Every Secret Thing: Patricia Campbell Hearst's Own Story
by Patricia Campbell Hearst with Alvin Moscow, Doubleday, 504 pp., $17.95

Reviewed by Eliot Fremont-Smith

ON THE NIGHT of February 4, 1974, Patricia Campbell Hearst was kidnapped at gunpoint by masked terrorists who invaded her and her fiancé's apartment in Berkeley. Wearing only panties and a bathrobe, she was blindfolded, stuffed into a car, informed she was a "prisoner of war" captured by something called the Symbionese Liberation Army, and taken to a nearby "safehouse." For most of the next 57 days and nights, she lived in a small, unlit closet.



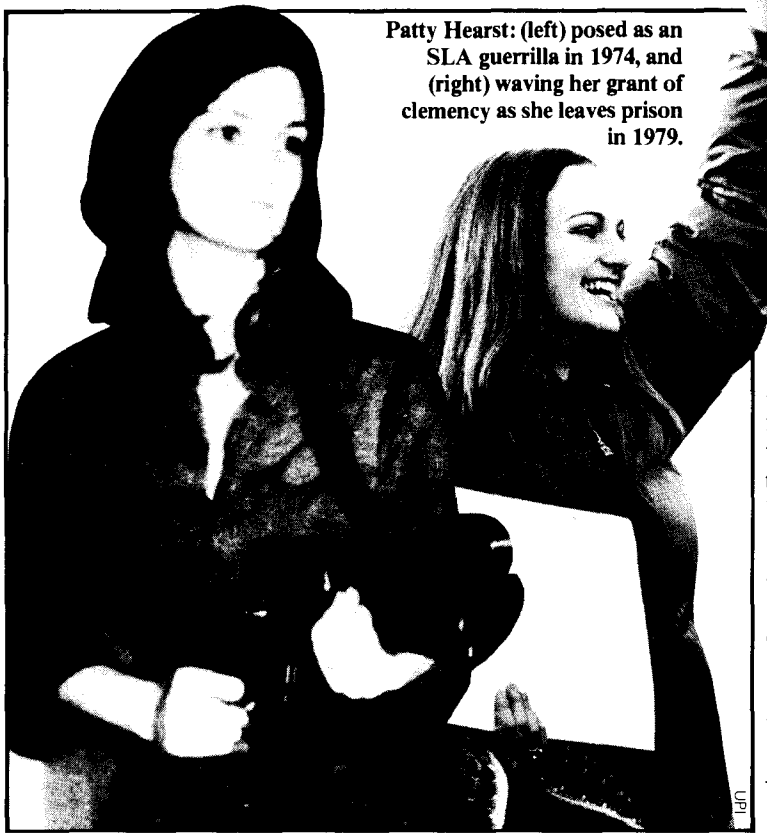
In the beginning, she was instructed on pain of death never to remove her blindfold nor lower the radio that blared in her ear. She was interrogated on her past life and the wealth of her father, William Randolph Hearst Jr. She was also lectured on the aims of the SLA—to overthrow the "capitalist-racist pig" government. She was forced to make a tape for the media and her parents about her "fair treatment," and to submit to sex with the SLA leader, code name Cinque, a black ex-convict, and a cohort, Cujo, a former preppie. At times, as a reward for self-criticism, she was allowed to take a bath. At some early point, during the haggling over the food-for-the-poor ransom demand, she realized that no matter how many millions of dollars her father could raise, this would not buy her freedom. As she tells it:

> A silent battle was waged there in the closet, and my mind won. Deliberately and clearly, I decided that I would not die, not of my own accord ....All my torment, all my false hopes, all the emotional energy I was expending in fantasizing my rescue, my being set free, or my being shot and killed, were not helping me a single bit. I decided I would not think of the future. I would concentrate on staying alive one day at a time.

Every Secret Thing is neither easy nor pleasant reading. It's too harrowing for that, too close to home. It is first of all Patty Hearst's brief for her defense—for her "one day at a time" decision did in fact result in her becoming a member of the SLA in mind and deed. The book is not fiction, not soap opera. The reader, no less than Patty Hearst herself, is called upon to judge real events and character (what would *I* have done?). The answers haunt and exhaust. The narrative is enormously detailed, clichéd, and repetitive —everything you didn't always want to know about the Symbionese Liberation Army and the subsequent trial. Even so, one gets a hint of a thousand pages left out. And there is, too, a strange distancing of tone that's off-putting. Yet the tone is appropriate to the ordeal Patty Hearst underwent and became a part of.

The driving force of the book is a series of painful tensions between guilt and innocence, excuse and anger, our sentiments for any individual in such anguish and the *symbol* of Patty Hearst as a privileged millionheiress. And there is the further tension between our assumption of social and ethical stability and this book's testimony of how vulnerable that assumption is—how it can all be turned on its head in a flash.

When Patty Hearst emerged from the closet, she was ready to become "Tania." With the blindfold off, she could identify her seven youthful captors, and thus her life was in even greater danger. She was set up for the Hibernia bank robbery on April 15, 1974; the next day the U.S. attorney general called her "a common criminal." In the aftermath, she succumbed to a paranoia (and who is to say it wasn't a true reading?) that if the SLA didn't kill her, the FBI would. As she tells it, whatever doubts she had were sealed by the L.A. police shootout on May 17, in which Cinque, Cujo, and four of her other captors were burned to death—an event she witnessed on live TV in a Disneyland motel with Bill and Emily Harris. This was just after another turning point, when she sprayed the sidewalk outside Mel's Sporting Goods Store with bullets to aid the shoplifting escape of the Harrises. It was her first opportunity to escape the SLA, but she didn't even try. Why? Patty Hearst tells us: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Patty Hearst: (left) posed as an SLA guerrilla in 1974, and (right) waving her grant of clemency as she leaves prison in 1979.

> The only answer I could find that satisfied *me*, which later was bolstered and reaffirmed by expert opinion on the subject, was that I acted instinctively, because I had been trained and drilled to do just that, to react to a situation without thinking, just as soldiers are trained and drilled to obey an order under fire instinctively, without ques-

Eliot Fremont-Smith is literary critic of the *Village Voice*.

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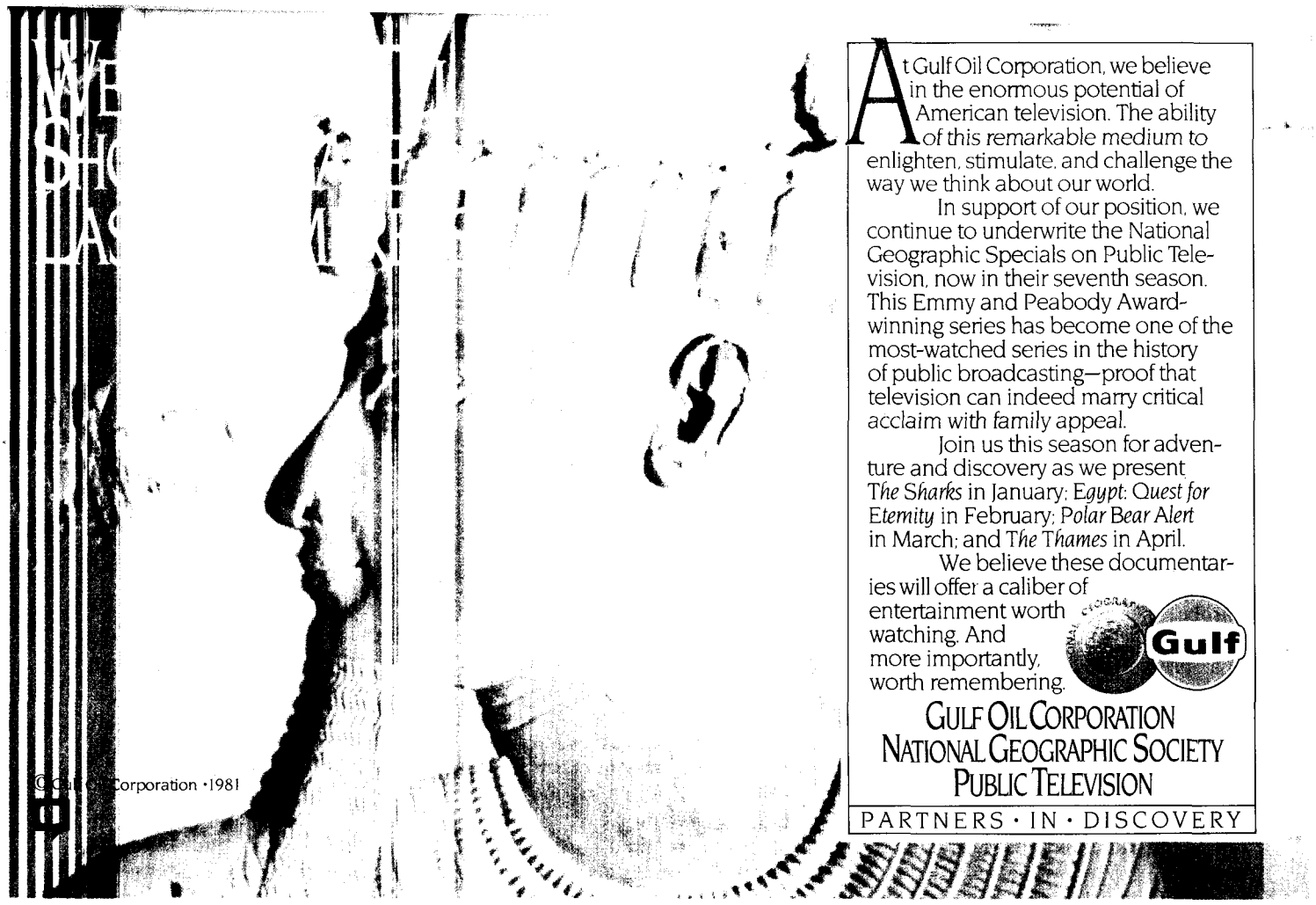

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tioning it. By [this time] I was in fact a soldier in the Symbionese Liberation Army.

This book tells all—the "codes of war," the backgrounds and personalities of SLA members and recruits, the endless battles over leadership and tactics of revolution and sexual comradeship, the stealing of cars, the journey East with sportswriter Jack Scott and his parents, the summer in New York and Pennsylvania, the return to Sacramento, the building of a new SLA, two more bank robberies (one with a fatality), the capture in San Francisco in September 1975, the imprisonment and trial (the villains of this book include defense lawyer F. Lee Bailey), the eventual commutation by President Carter in February 1979. But it doesn't tell a lot of whys.

Thus, at the end, one is left with a hundred questions. Not about Patty—one believes every word, accepts every latter-day explanation of paranoia and "instinct" and confusion, and certainly honors her suffering and anger—but about how people work and become what they become. Apparently, anything can happen. The SLA was a tiny band of mostly middle-class and white crazies, yet there seemed no shortage of leftist sympathizers. Some correctly thought the SLA was vicious and harmful and suicidally stupid, but they protected it despite robbery, kidnap, and murder. One has to ask why. Patty Hearst doesn't. The best explanation for, say, the Harrises is that there are "evil people," but that is inadequate. Of course, there's a "high" in revolutionary zeal, kicking over all background traces, committing oneself to final violence, letting go all sense of affect. And it can happen left and right (CIA agents secretly training Libyan terrorists). Or it can happen down some peculiar middle to charismatic fanaticism (the great murder-suicide in Guyana—Congressman Ryan, who died there, was an early champion of clemency for Patty Hearst). The ironies never cease. *Every Secret Thing* is a one-person documentary, and the toughest questions lie beyond its vision. This is unsatisfying, but there's a limit to what can be rightfully asked of Patty Hearst. She's not a reporter or philosopher thinking on these things. She is by her own telling a victim, an unwilling but co-opted endurer.

Every Secret Thing is an accounting, a brief, a detailed purging, and (whether you believe entirely her defense or not) a most horrendous *true* story. At bottom, it's about the frightening vulnerability of all of us, indeed of the whole society as well as of the ethical and empathetic values we take for granted as both innately strong and defining of character. In a very short time, Patty Hearst was, if the word has any meaning, effectively "brainwashed." It's easy to find fault, and only a little harder to weep, and then again sort of easy to be satisfied that she is now alive and free (though guarded and armed) and in her "right mind." Yet her anger nags, as does the injustice and as do some awful points of similarity between what went down in the SLA and what may operate just beneath our system of law and civility. For a time, Patty Hearst saw precious little difference between the SLA and her lawyers or the strange legal medicine men who tried to trap a criminal or make her "prove" her innocence.

After the book is done, the tears do come. This particular individual calamity overwhelms doubt and resistance—even as one has to decline specific blame for whatever made Patty Hearst a famous name and kidnap bait, and whatever in us (and her jury) allowed or required a turning away of sympathy. The commutation was no doubt right. But what's left from this exhaustive document and saga is outrage, and it goes in all directions, and finds no home. ■

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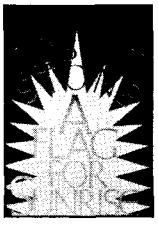
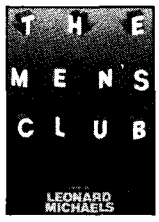
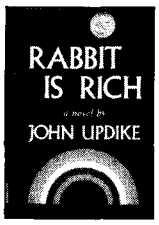
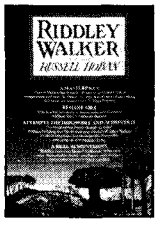
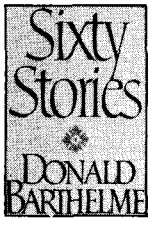
The 20 Best Books of 1981

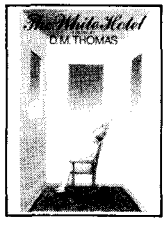


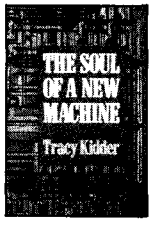


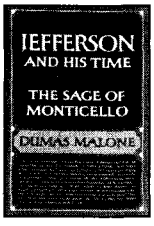


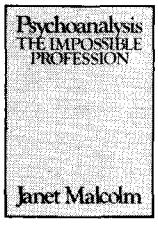


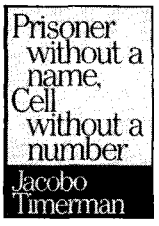


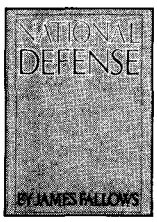


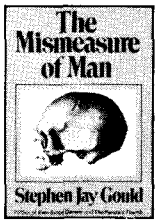


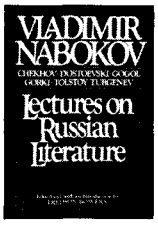


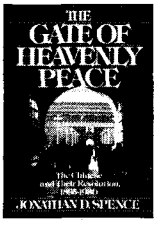












By Robert R. Harris

It has become fashionable among many of our leading culture arbiters to decry the lack of quality in contemporary writing—and many of the books published in 1981 do offer some aid and comfort to the collapse-of-literature crowd. Such major writers as Gore Vidal, Toni Morrison, John Irving, Tom Wolfe, and V.S. Naipaul turned out disappointing work. But—pace the alarmists—many more good books are finding their way into print than ever before. And even though fewer than a half dozen of the books published this year court brilliance, 1981 did produce a solid body of fiction and nonfiction—works of outstanding merit and lasting value. Here is our choice of the 20 best books of the year.

In fiction, four of the seven novels and three short-story collections on our list are stylistically or structurally daring. Books by Russell Hoban, Donald Barthelme, D.M. Thomas, and Raymond Carver strive to expand our notion of the limits of fiction and language. Other excellent novelists—this year, most

Robert R. Harris is the literary editor of *Saturday Review*.

Fiction

A Flag for Sunrise by Robert Stone (Alfred A. Knopf)
Gorky Park by Martin Cruz Smith (Random House)
July's People by Nadine Gordimer (The Viking Press)
Liars in Love by Richard Yates (Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence)
The Men's Club by Leonard Michaels (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
Rabbit Is Rich by John Updike (Alfred A. Knopf)
Riddley Walker by Russell Hoban (Summit Books)
Sixty Stories by Donald Barthelme (G.P. Putnam's Sons)
What We Talk About When We Talk About Love by Raymond Carver (Alfred A. Knopf)
The White Hotel by D.M. Thomas (The Viking Press)

Nonfiction

Basin and Range by John McPhee (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980 by Jonathan D. Spence (The Viking Press)
Lectures on Russian Literature by Vladimir Nabokov (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich)
The Mismeasure of Man by Stephen Jay Gould (W.W. Norton)
National Defense by James Fallows (Random House)
Old Glory: An American Voyage by Jonathan Raban (Simon & Schuster)
Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number by Jacobo Timerman (Alfred A. Knopf)
Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession by Janet Malcolm (Alfred A. Knopf)
The Sage of Monticello by Dumas Malone (Little, Brown)
The Soul of a New Machine by Tracy Kidder (Atlantic-Little, Brown)

Listed alphabetically by title.

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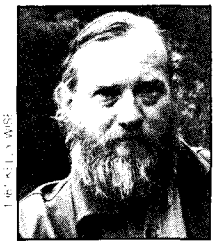
notably Robert Stone—have used the well-constructed plot with great success. Still others—Richard Yates, for example—rely on concentrated realism, while John Updike weighs in with his usual lyrical beauty and epic narrative. Tried-and-true themes—the trouble between men and women, and the pain mankind inflicts upon itself—predominate the year's best fiction, but they are handled with imagination and verve.

In nonfiction, perhaps in reaction to some of today's paramount concerns, no fewer than four of our selections interpret science. John McPhee, Stephen Jay Gould, Tracy Kidder, and Janet Malcolm explore respectively the intricacies of geology, intelligence testing, computer science, and psychoanalysis.

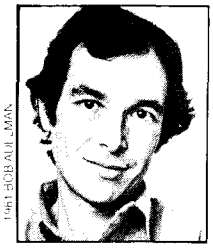
Since World War II, the writing of biography has burgeoned in America; it has gotten better and more sophisticated. Several good biographies—of Otto von Bismarck, Ralph Waldo Emerson, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Carlos Williams, George Orwell, Andrew Jackson, Bernard Baruch, Theodore Roosevelt, Ulysses S. Grant, Felix Frankfurter, W.H. Auden, Saki, and the Beecher family—were published this year. But only one, Dumas Malone's *The Sage of Monticello*, has made our list.

Fiction



A Flag for Sunrise
by Robert Stone
Alfred A. Knopf
439 pp., $13.95

SO WELL-CRAFTED, intricately plotted, and quickly paced is this exceptional novel that it can quite easily be mistaken for just a melodramatic thriller. It *is* a thriller, but it is much much more. Robert Stone throws a motley group of Catholics—a beautiful nun, a whiskey priest, an anthropologist with CIA connections, and a drifter/deserter—into the cauldron of Tecan, a mythological Latin American country about to erupt in revolution. Stone's central characters encounter gun runners, revolutionaries, and spies, and the novel boils with violence, sadism, and sex. But the author is as concerned with his Catholics' moral dilemmas as he is with his plot's complicated twists. He combines action and philosophical rumination with a deftness matching Graham Greene's. Stone's *A Hall of Mirrors* was filmed as *WUSA*, and his National Book Award-winning *Dog Soldiers* as *Who'll Stop the Rain*. If Hollywood repeats itself, this brilliant novel will be turned into a Grade-B movie too. Read the book instead.

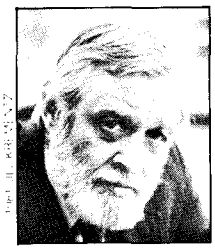


Gorky Park
by Martin Cruz Smith
Random House
365 pp., $13.95

MARTIN CRUZ SMITH perpetrated several lackluster novels before he settled down to write *Gorky Park*, one of the best thrillers of recent years. Arkady Renko, chief police inspector for the People's Militia, is summoned when three horribly mutilated bodies are discovered in Moscow's Gorky Park. Before he's done solving the puzzle, Renko locks horns with the KGB, the CIA, the FBI, and the NYPD. Smith evidently spent very little time in Russia, but his portrayal of things Russian, including a Byzantine law-enforcement bureaucracy has the ring of accuracy. The twisted plot is not perfectly executed—we learn too soon who the villain is. But Smith keeps us reading anyway, eager to learn *how* the crimes have been committed. Renko, like John le Carré's George Smiley, is a likable, decent truth-seeker with marriage problems. And *Gorky Park* ranks with le Carré's best.

July's People
by Nadine Gordimer
The Viking Press
160 pp., $10.95

BAMFORD AND MAUREEN SMALES are middle-class white liberals from Johannesburg who claim to favor the liberation of South Africa's blacks. They have often thought of leaving their country, but when this poignant novel opens, it is clear that they've stayed too long. Set in the near future, *July's People* tells of what happens to the Smaleses after blacks take control of South Africa. July, the family's trusted manservant, takes them into hiding in his village in the lowveld of the Transvaal. There, tension mounts between July and the Smaleses and between Bam and Maureen themselves. This is a parable about ruined lives and the pain of facing up to prejudices. Gordimer has always written with courage about her native South Africa and apartheid, sensitively exploring black-white relationships. In *July's People*, she does so again with force and eloquence.



Liars in Love
by Richard Yates
Delacorte Press/
Seymour Lawrence
272 pp., $14.95

IN HIS FIRST collection of short stories since *Eleven Kinds of Loneliness* was published nearly 20 years ago, Richard Yates—author of *Revolutionary Road*, *The Easter Parade*, and *A Good School*—offers seven lovely, long stories. Yates's old-fashioned realism is suffused with emotion and heartbreak, and even a Joycean epiphany or two, as when a young boy discovers that his mother's cloying best friend is not above playing the child's stutter for a laugh, or when an American G.I. learns that the sister from whom he's long been separated can be cruelly inattentive. Beautifully written, these stories are wrenching: A coed tells her father that she doesn't love him anymore; a brother and sister witness their mother's drunken tirade and their father's uncontrollable tears; a young writer comes to understand that his troubled life contains all that his colleague dreams of. Yates has yet to receive the recognition he deserves.

The Men's Club
by Leonard Michaels
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
181 pp., $10.95

LEONARD MICHAELS'S men's club includes a Berkeley college professor, a psychotherapist, a lawyer, a doctor, a real-estate dealer, and an ex-basketball player turned college administrator. They meet one evening at the psychotherapist's home, gorge on the food that's been prepared by the psychotherapist's wife for a meeting of her women's club, wreck the house, and lugubriously

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lament their misadventures with women. This short, funny novel has been accused of being an anti-feminist tract (the psychotherapist has slept with 622 women, and he's still counting), relentlessly indulging in vengeful male fantasies. It's not, of course. Michaels's rather anonymous male characters reveal the frustrations and failures of male bonding. During a discussion of marital infidelity, one character, asked if he's ever jealous about his wife's trysts, replies, "No, man. I'm liberated." Asked what that means, he says, "as if it were obvious, 'I don't feel anything.' " If this novel disturbs, it is because it has the shock of truth.

©1981 ELLEN JAHLBERG

Rabbit Is Rich
by John Updike
Alfred A. Knopf
467 pp., $13.95

HARRY "RABBIT" ANGSTROM is back after his adventures in *Rabbit, Run* and *Rabbit Redux*. It's 1979 and middle-aged Rabbit is making quite a lot of money in his Pennsylvania Toyota dealership. Lustful as ever, Rabbit nevertheless has mellowed, pretty much resigned to a life of "quiet desperation." He doesn't get along very well with his deadbeat son, Nelson, and his wife and mother-in-law can be trying. Skylab is falling, gas prices are rising, Krugerrands are a hot investment and Ipana toothpaste has vanished from the supermarket shelves. But Rabbit endures. John Updike is often criticized for not directly tackling the major concerns of modern America, and he's accused of writing overly poetic prose. But *Rabbit Is Rich* is blessed with a stunning lyrical grace, and in 25 years the *Rabbit* books will no doubt be judged a classic American epic of middle-class manners and mores.

©1981 STEEL PERKINS

Riddley Walker
by Russell Hoban
Summit Books
220 pp., $12.95

"WALKER IS my name and I am the same. Riddley Walker. Walking my riddles where ever theyve took me and walking them now on this paper the same." Riddley is a "connexion" man. His job is to explain the traveling Punch and Judy shows that dramatize how many thousands of years in the past—in 1997—"the Littl Shynin Man the Addom" destroyed most of Western civilization. In Russell Hoban's highly imaginative world, the survivors of nuclear holocaust dig up "old Iron" (machines) around "Cambry" (Canterbury), England, dodge roving packs of wild dogs, speak in a fractured new lingo, and try to find clues to a past they can only partially comprehend. "How cud any 1," Riddley laments, "not want to be like them what had boats in the air and picters on the wind?" But Riddley comes to realize that "the onlyes power is no power," and Hoban drives home his point about what it means for mankind to cross the brink into nuclear war. It takes 20 or 30 pages to get the gist of the novel's made-up language. It's worth it. This book stands as a warning of what nightmares may await us. And it offers little solace: Before the story is over, the human survivors of man's awesome destructiveness reinvent gunpowder.

©1981 THOMAS VILLOH

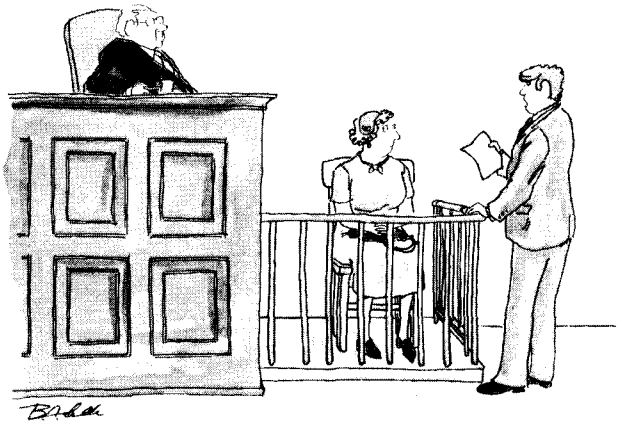
Sixty Stories
by Donald Barthelme
G.P. Putnam's Sons
457 pp., $15.95

PROBABLY NO LIVING WRITER has as many bad imitators as does Donald Barthelme. For almost 20 years his stories have been appearing in the *New Yorker*, and countless less intelligent, less talented writers have tried to ape his unique style. With consummate class, Barthelme pushes post-modern experimentalism to the limit. These 60 stories are, by turn, chic, playful, sad, funny, self-indulgent, philosophical, surreal. Some, naturally, are better than others. It's very taxing to read them all at once, and explaining what they are *about* is like trying to interpret a collage. A giant balloon hovers above Manhattan; opportunities are missed; relationships sour; Indians attack; Robert Kennedy appears. This collection reminds us of what difficult pleasure Barthelme can bring patient readers and also reminds us not to confuse him with his lessers.

©1981 SUSAN GALLAGHER

What We Talk About When We Talk About Love
by Raymond Carver
Alfred A. Knopf
159 pp., $9.95

"L.D. PUT THE shaving bag under his arm and picked up the suitcase. He said, 'I just want to say one thing more.' But then he could not think what it could possibly be." So ends a marriage in "One More Thing," one of 17 sparse stories in this slick collection. Raymond Carver pares language to the bone and writes stories in which, seemingly, nothing happens. Characters fret and talk or—more accurately (and more meaningfully)—keep silent. But the stories are laced with haunting brutality: Parents end a quarrel by pulling their baby out of each other's arms; fishing buddies come upon the body of a drowned woman and don't



"Now, Mrs. Johnson, you'd been waiting in the checkout line for 15 minutes when the late Mr. Elliot came up and tried to stamp a 10% price increase on your five packages of ground round! Would you please tell the jury what happened next?"

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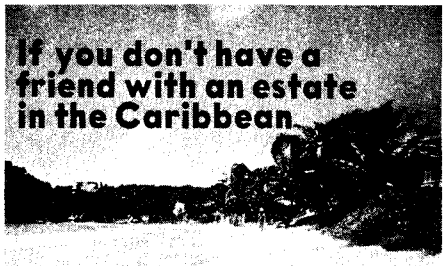

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RANDOM HOUSE

Photo: Ian Cook

BOOKS

report it until their vacation weekend is over; two men start out to pick up young women and end by stoning them to death. Carver's world is bleak, and he never deigns to explain motives or emotions. His strikingly off-key stories, some only a few pages long, are capable of setting your teeth on edge.

JOYCE RAVID

The White Hotel
by D.M. Thomas
The Viking Press
274 pp., $12.95

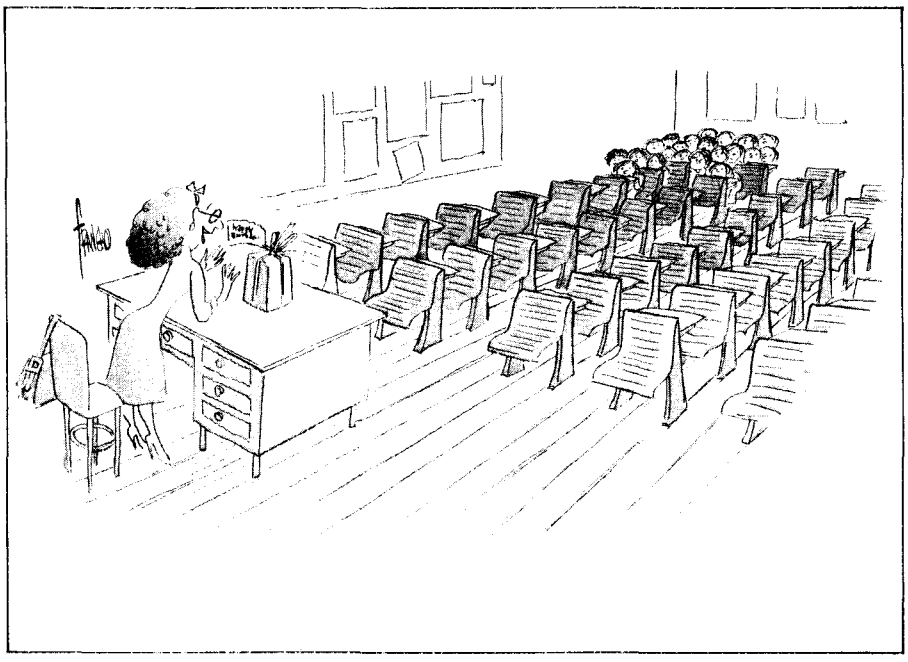
THE MOST STUNNING feature of this moving novel is its odd—and bold—structure. Frequent shifts in point of view and time sequence occur in a vibrant pastiche: letters by and to Sigmund Freud; deranged compositions written by the novel's heroine while under Freud's care; a case history by Freud; a conventional narrative detailing the heroine's life; and a ghostly conclusion in which all of the novel's dead are re-united in Palestine. Through this intricate web, Thomas, a British poet, relates the story of Lisa Erdman, born to a Jewish father and a Catholic mother in Odessa, from her career as both a dancer and a singer to her death at the hands of the Nazis at Babi Yar. The heroine's life is a metaphor for our century. Thomas convincingly implies that neurosis, bizarre sexual fantasy, and an obsession with death form a major part of our contemporary, cultural legacy.

Nonfiction

VIRT THOMAS/VIC TOR

Basin and Range
by John McPhee
Farrar, Straus & Giroux
216 pp., $10.95

GEOLOGY RIVALS economics as a dismal science. There are all those rocks so difficult to distinguish from one another, and all that geologic time to keep track of. And geologists' jargon doesn't help ("meteoric water," we learn, is only rain). John McPhee is a master interpreter, and he brings geology to life. Discussion centers on plate tectonics, or the forces that make continents drift. The Red Sea as it exists today provides a glimpse of what the Atlantic looked like five million years after it originated somewhere in New Jersey. The same process is going on now in the American West's basins and ranges. Sooner or later, an ocean will begin to form; California will become an island. Down on the earth's mantle, plates (there are some 20 of them) shift. If they separate, oceans are formed; if they collide, mountains sprout. During the Oligocene, India was tossed up against Tibet, and we got the Himalayas. Writes McPhee: "If by some fiat I had to restrict all this writing to one sentence, this is the one I would choose: The summit of Mount Everest is marine limestone." He makes it all seem that simple.



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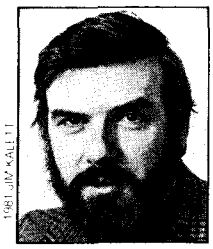


1981 JIM McALLISTER

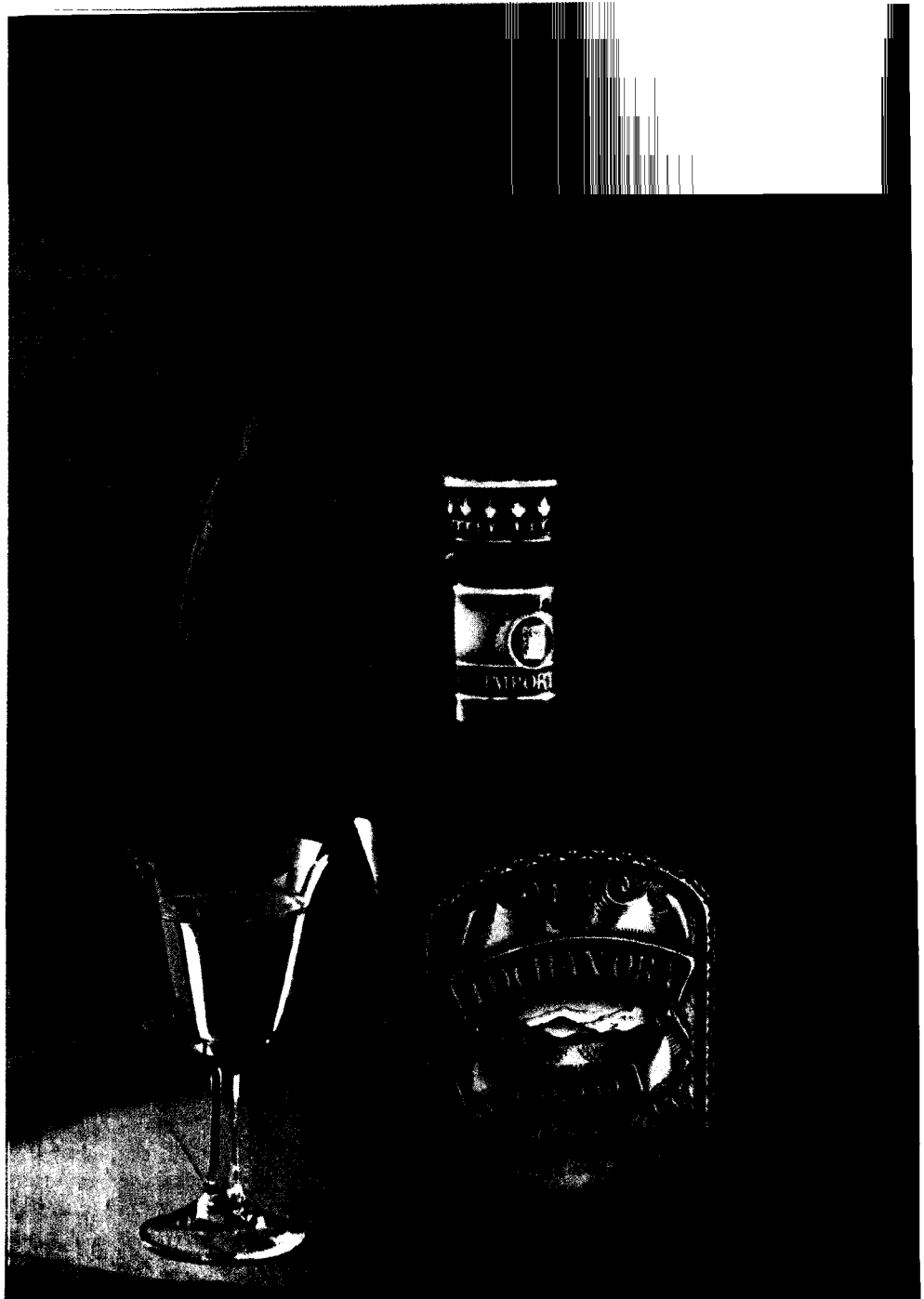
The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980
by Jonathan D. Spence
The Viking Press
465 pp., $19.95

WHILE THE WEST devotedly engaged in imperialism and yet determinedly remained culturally isolated from the East, influential Chinese intellectuals were busily devouring the works of Nietzsche, Shaw, Ibsen, Gogol, and even Arthur Conan Doyle. In this ground-breaking intellectual history, Yale historian Jonathan D. Spence demonstrates again that it is Westerners who have been remiss in learning about the Chinese. Spence's narrative of China's continuing revolution focuses on three intellectuals: Kang Youwei (1858-1927), a democratic reformer; Lu Xun (1881-1936), a short-story writer who has been compared with Hemingway; and Ding Ling (born in 1905), a feminist novelist. Their stories add a refreshing personal note to Spence's scrupulous and spell-binding account of 100 years of upheaval in China. *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* is essential reading for anyone interested in Chinese cultural history.

JERRY BAUER

Lectures on Russian Literature
by Vladimir Nabokov
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
352 pp., $19.95

STUDENTS AT CORNELL who during the 1950s signed up for Lit 311-312 (Masters of European Fiction) and Lit 325-326 (Masters of Russian Literature in Translation) were in for a treat. Their professor was one of the premiere novelists of our time—Vladimir Nabokov. Collected here are essays, based on Nabokov's lecture notes, on Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Gorky, plus pieces about Soviet (as opposed to Russian) literature, the art of translation, and philistinism. With the exception of a niggling essay on Dostoevsky—Nabokov never blinked when it came to attacking genius—these lectures are stimulating, idiosyncratic, and wonderfully instructive. Nabokov leads the reader through dense texts, but interest never flags because he frequently injects quirky views on the writers he discusses, and he



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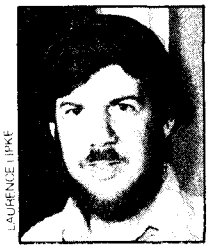
is always supremely witty. Last year, Nabokov's *Lectures on Literature* dealt with Joyce, Dickens, Flaubert, Kafka, Proust, Jane Austen, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Together the two posthumous volumes constitute a remarkable guided tour through some of the best books ever written.


LAURENCE LIPKE

The Mismeasure of Man
by Stephen Jay Gould
W.W. Norton
352 pp., $14.95

OVER THE PAST few years, in such books as *Ever Since Darwin* and *The Panda's Thumb*, Stephen Jay Gould—who teaches ecology, biology, and the history of science at Harvard—has been explaining science, and especially evolution, with a clarity matched by few other scientists and academics. Best of all, he does not resort to the cloying condescension that plagues the works of more acclaimed science writer/gurus like Carl Sagan. In *The Mismeasure of Man* Gould relates the history of theories of human intelligence—including monogeny, polygeny, phrenology, and hereditarian IQ. He notes their inconsistencies and documents the unintentional and—in the case of Sir Cyril Burt's now-proven frauds—the intentional misuse of scientific data. Discussing the work of Louis Agassiz, Alfred Binet, Paul Broca, R.M. Yerkes, Arthur Jensen, and others, Gould pins down intelligence testing's basic flaw: the belief that scientific analysis can be used to make our *idea* of intelligence into a single *thing* that can be measured. This readable, sensible book deals a serious blow to biological determinism. The fight will continue.

1981 DIANA WALKER

National Defense
by James Fallows
Random House
204 pp., $12.95

THIS SLIM, well-written, important book didn't make enough of an impact when it was published earlier this year. James Fallows's message is simple: In recent years the Pentagon has failed to get the most bang for its bucks. With no malice or rancor toward the military, Fallows calmly demonstrates how the Pentagon's "culture of procurement" is attracted to expensive weapons that are so overladen with costly sophisticated hardware that they often malfunction in combat. He presents two thorough case studies—of the F-16 fighter plane and the M-16 rifle—that show how practical designs were altered for bureaucratic reasons and encumbered with accessory after accessory until the final weapons were not effective. Fallows also chides our skewed thinking about nuclear war: Members of the defense community dream up scenarios for disaster, but do not really *know* (because it is impossible to test) if, or how well, our complex nuclear missile system will work. Fallows favors a draft and a strong military; his criticism is constructive. As America embarks on the building of MX missiles and B-1 bombers, we should take heed.

"We've got to get married, Gene. We need the wedding presents."

WAYNE GROSSLIN

Old Glory: An American Voyage
by Jonathan Raban
Simon & Schuster
409 pp., $16.95

ENGLISHMAN JONATHAN RABAN, author of the acclaimed *Arabia*, was hooked by the Mississippi River when, sitting by a brook in the English countryside at age seven, he read *Huckleberry Finn*. Thirty years later Raban lit out in search of his dream river. What he found wasn't exactly the river of his boyhood imagination, but it was nevertheless awe-inspiring. Raban traveled down the Mississippi from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico in a 16-foot aluminum boat powered by a 15-horsepower outboard motor. He stopped off at scores of hamlets, towns, and cities, and his accounts of state fairs, pig roasts, church meetings, local political rallies, and so on are enthralling. Raban weaves his vignettes of life on and along the Mississippi with the agility of a novelist. People are drawn to him and open up, and we are the beneficiaries of his curiosity and wanderlust. This is travel writing at its best.

MARTHA KAPLAN

Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number
by Jacobo Timerman
Alfred A. Knopf
164 pp., $10.95

ON APRIL 15, 1977, 20 armed men dressed in civilian clothes kidnapped Jacobo Timerman from his Buenos Aires home. Timerman, a Jew, was editor and publisher of one of Argentina's leading daily newspapers, *La Opinión*, and he had criticized both left- and right-wing terrorism in his native land. He was held for almost two years—often in solitary confinement—and tortured by Argentina's national police. A military tribunal and the Argentine Supreme Court ordered his release to no avail. International pressure finally freed him in 1979. He was stripped of his citizenship and expelled, and his property was confiscated. He never had a trial, nor were any charges against him ever made official. Timerman tells his harrowing story with detachment: the prison guards' anti-Semitic taunts; the pictures of Hitler

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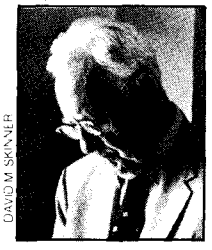
hung in torture cells; the bizarre belief of the Argentine military that Israel plans to seize Patagonia for a second Zionist state; the banning of sociology, psychology, and philosophy as university majors; the more than 15,000 who have disappeared since the military takeover; the deafening silence on the part of Argentina's Jewish leaders. Timerman's real-life horror tale has successfully withstood the questioning of those who like to draw fine distinctions between authoritarian and totalitarian governments. His book is powerful.

Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession
by Janet Malcolm
Alfred A. Knopf
174 pp., $9.95

THE GOAL of psychoanalysis, wrote Freud, is to transform "hysterical misery into common unhappiness." Janet Malcolm, author of *Diana and Nikon*, went behind the scenes to find out how this often painful process is carried out. Her incisive report is based on a series of conversations she had with "Aaron Green," a pseudonymous psychoanalyst at the ultra-orthodox New York Psychoanalytic Institute. Through these talks, Malcolm not only penetrates the institute's internecine politics and Green's own psychological hang-ups, but she delves into the doctrinal disputes that divide the psychoanalytic community. Should an analyst act as an uninvolved observer and hide his own emotional reactions, or should he interact with the patient? Should psychoanalysis emphasize instincts or self-esteem? Does the critical stage of personality development occur during the first two years of life or later? Malcolm objectively reviews the answers that have been given to these questions since Freud's day. Her compassionate, insightful analysis of a profession that is frought with internal battling is first-rate journalism.



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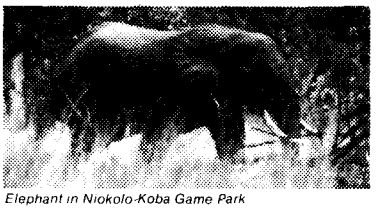
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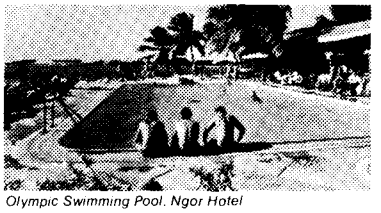
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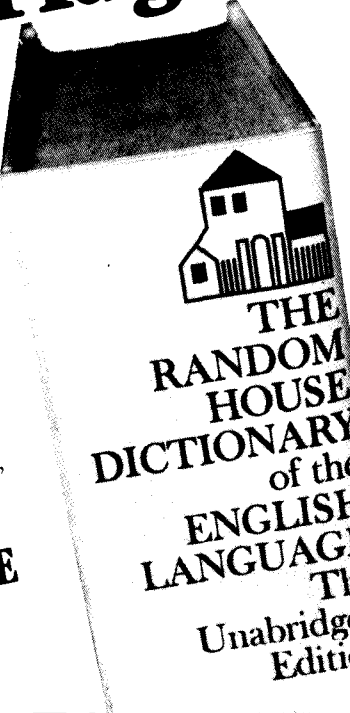

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monumental *Jefferson and His Time*, a biography that was begun in 1948 and won a Pulitzer Prize in 1975. Here, Malone covers the last 17 years of Jefferson's life, most of which were spent at his Virginia home, Monticello. Malone portrays the retired Jefferson as indefatigable and optimistic as ever. Jefferson was broke (no presidential pensions then) and heavily in debt, yet he stoically carried on his voluminous correspondence, entertained numerous family members and state guests, and ran his plantation. Even more remarkably, he spent years arranging the financing needed to create the University of Virginia; then he designed it, hired its faculty, selected its curriculum, and planned its library. Malone's biography is a substantial academic achievement, and perhaps it does require six full volumes to capture fully a man as complex as Jefferson. Malone discounts reports of Jefferson's involvement with his slave Sally Hemings, and very recent studies by other historians indicate he's probably right.

COURTESY JOHN E. MURPHY JR.

The Soul of a New Machine
by Tracy Kidder
Atlantic-Little, Brown
293 pp., $13.95

COMPUTERS BAFFLE most of us, and yet every day they play an increasingly larger role in our lives. Journalist Tracy Kidder journeyed to the Data General Corporation in Massachusetts to observe how a computer is "invented." There he met a specially gathered team of whiz kids assigned to design a "32-bit" computer in less than a year. Most of the young engineers and programmers were in their early 20s; only one was a woman. An eccentric and ambitious group, they worked in utmost secrecy and day and night—and for not a lot of money. The pressure was intense, and one young man burned out and fled. He left a note on his computer terminal: "I'm going to a commune in Vermont and will deal with no unit of time shorter than a season." With only a slight delay, the young scientists succeeded in constructing the Eclipse MV/8000, code-named Eagle. Kidder does not exactly make computer science as easy to understand as long division, but he provides a *feeling* for what this new and ever-changing technology is all about. He tells a *human* story of enormous effort; yet, eerily, it is the Eagle itself that emerges as the book's hero. ■

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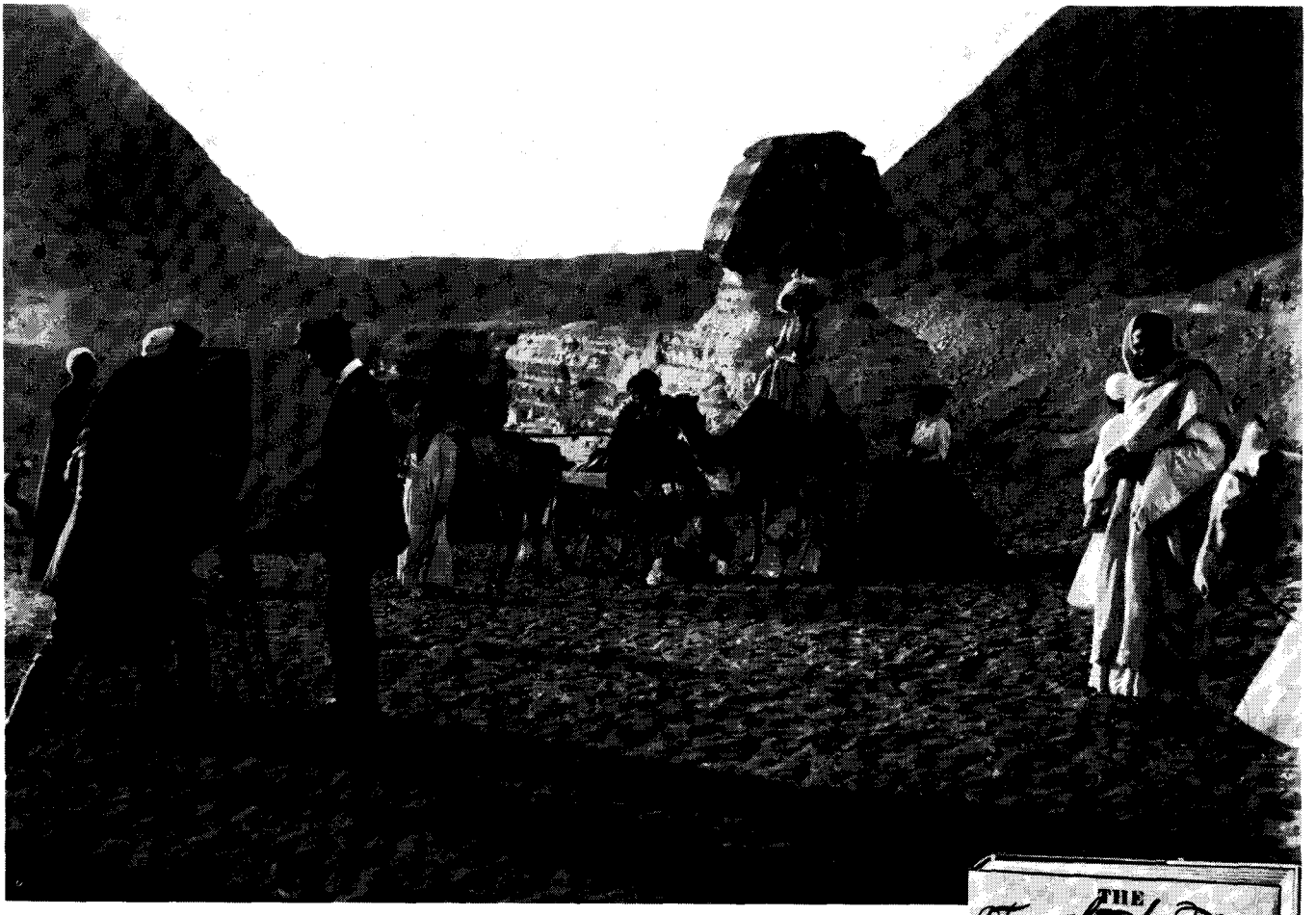

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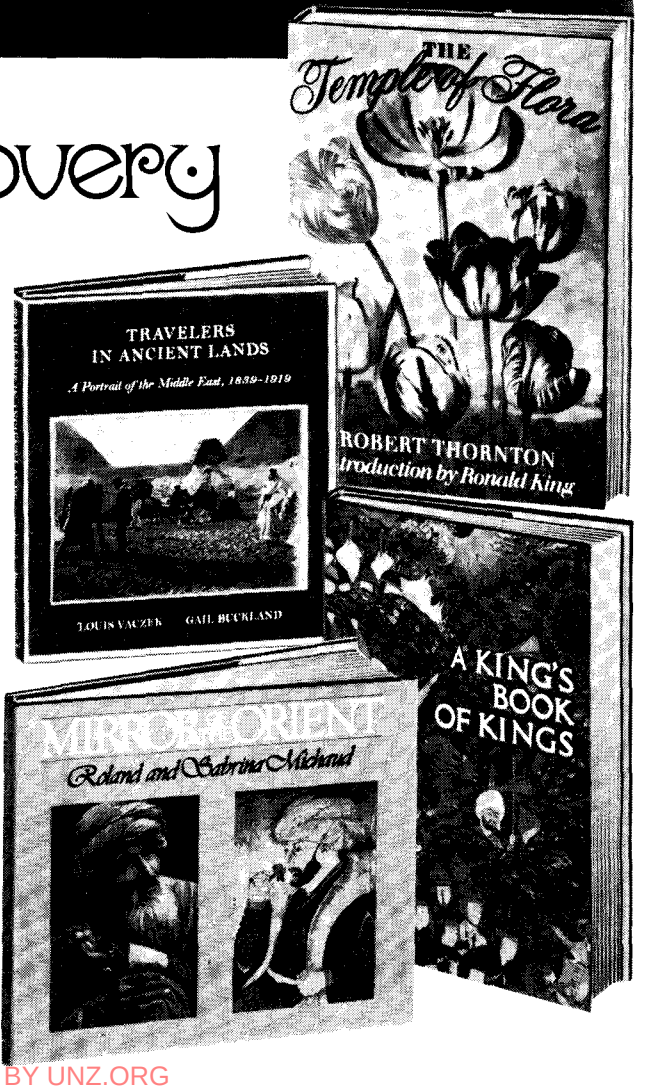

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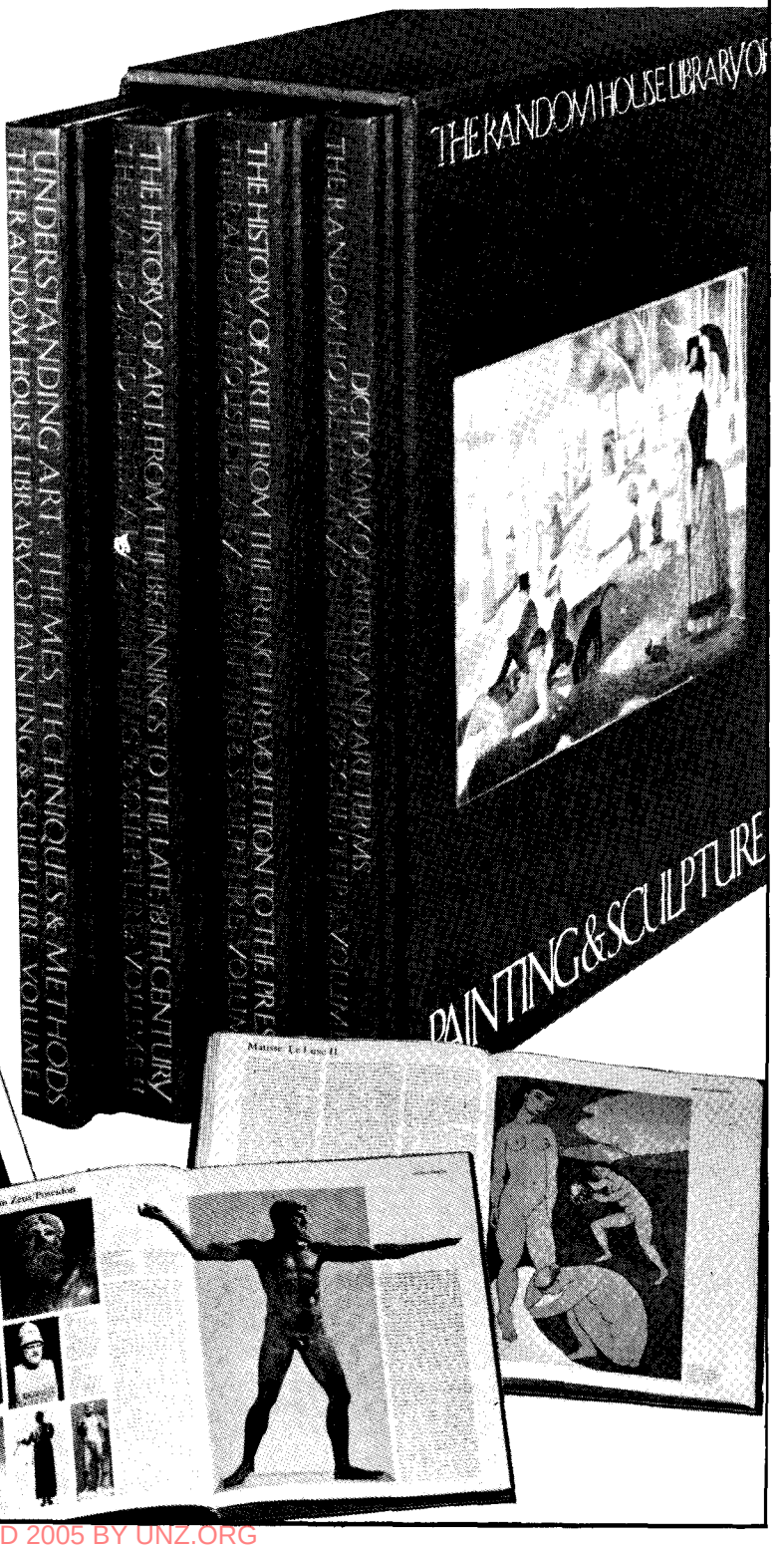

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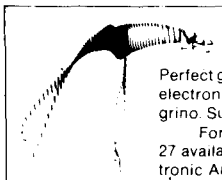

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a. Total no. copies printed (net press run)	536,353	500,656
b. Paid circulation:		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	22,500	22,500
2. Mail subscriptions	477,169	440,685
c. Total paid circulation (sum of 10b1 and 10b2)	499,669	463,185
d. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means; samples, complimentary, and other free copies	7,036	7,711
e. Total distribution (sum of c and d)	506,705	470,896
f. Copies not distributed:		
1. Office use, leftover, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	2,229	2,229
2. Returns from news agents	27,419	27,531
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11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

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Publisher

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SR Competition No. 27

Who does not detest the telephone answering machine? Yet what busy person has not at least dreamed of succumbing to the awful desire of owning one? If only because if makes feasible the following sort of delicious conversation:

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The only way this terrifying device can be inducted into the arena of polite human intercourse is the *message*. The message is the little 30-second recorded spiel in which you say who you are and ask how you can get in touch with your caller. The message is a form of stroking, a way of mollifying the outraged person at the other end. The text will naturally depend on who you are. The Rector of St. Michael's will be apologetic and inspiring. The proprietor of the Discreet Escort Service will speak only on advice of counsel. And so on. Kindly send us your messages, and keep them short. We will supply the little beep. Twenty-five dollars to each of the three winners.

Entries for Competition No. 27 must be received by December 31 and the winners will be announced in the March 1982 issue. Send submissions to *SR* Competition No. 27, *Saturday Review*, 150 East 58 Street, New York, N.Y. 10155. All entries become the property of *SR*.

Winners of No. 24

So many contestants sent in *dedications* of imaginary books that we were finally exasperated enough to unearth the September issue and check whether we might not after all have *called* for dedications. Nope. No dedications where none intended. Nevertheless, dutiful to a fault, we read every blessed piece of mail and found at least one erroneous entry that we cannot suppress. Here is the simple and appropriate dedication of Vernal Blossom's work, *Flowering Shrubs of North America:*

For Cythia.

Thanks to Flynn Belloc of Princeton, New Jersey.

Now to work. It was acknowledgments we wanted—the brief customary word of thanks with which authors flaunt their acquaintance with celebrities, pay off little debts, and demonstrate their devotion to their spouses, parents, children, and pets. In the brevity sweepstakes Philip Wagner of Port Chester, New York, had no close competitors:

HI MOM!

But if we gave that a prize we might be stampeded by minimalists, a dreadful prospect, so first prize goes to Hyman Gross of Monterey, California:

Some readers of the first edition have written me cards & letters wondering how I could of authored a book such as *Basement Seepage* and yet it be written on an extra high level of grammar, english, style, and what have you. Of course, it is not up to me to say as to whether they are right or not as far as my "style," which if I *do* happen to write better than some engineers, it is all owing to Miss Elizabeth Moody who taught me Tenth Grade english many "moons" ago in Reading, P.A. Plus I would like to once again thank my dear wife Billie Jo, but that is just Miss Moody again, for wouldn't you know she taught Billie Jo and I together in the same Tenth Grade! Miss Moody use to love to say no-body had any call to feel badly about not writing perfect english so long as they were a lady or a gentleman, which I would hope some people managed to do both, if that does not sound stuck-up. So therefore I hereby acknowledge Miss Elizabeth M. Moody for her part in *Basement Seepage* (2d. edition, revized), which a copy is being shipped to her at an early date, under seperate cover.

Second prize to Richard Teller of Hartford, Connecticut, who was nearly disqualified on grounds of realism:

This volume would never have appeared without the impetus to publish provided by the University's Committee on Promotion and Tenure, and the additional personal encouragement offered by the wife of a prominent member of that Committee, who in accordance with her wishes must remain anonymous. I would also like to thank the reference staff of the University Library, whose research provided invaluable support for conclusions already arrived at, and my graduate students, whose seminar papers constitute chapters 1-12.

Third prize goes to M. Freund of Gardiner, New York, who, true to his or her name, could scarcely be friendlier:

To all the good people who helped me write my book, *The Joy of Pleasure*, I wish to express my esteem and gratitude: I could not have done it without them. My editor, who, so to speak, "held my hand" the whole time. My sweetheart, who inspired me. His wife, who, knowingly(?) or unknowingly(??), inspired him so he could inspire me. Her lover, who inspired her so she could inspire him so he could inspire me. His wife, so she could inspire him to inspire her to inspire him to inspire me. Her lover and his roommates. My husband. Thanks gang! When I think of you it gets me THERE.

Puzzles

Literary Crypt No. 172

OPI TIME—PHOBIC OPHO CIT

OBYLT XT OPI GHTOI YE ZREZ

MEXMMIC UBYAXTI.

AYTT PHBO

Wit Twister No. 184

Edited by Arthur Swan

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash with a blank corresponds to a letter of the word.

The godlike bull with easy _____
glides
Across bright seas toward the

_____ shore.

Upon him, in a _____, Europa
rides
And drinks the air like _____ as
they soar.
Though Zeus will soon _____
his lover's vow,
Today her charms seem Paradise enow.

Sarah S. Lyon

Answers next issue

November Answers

Literary Crypt No. 171

From hence, let fierce contending nations know/What dire effects from civil discord flow.

Addison

Wit Twister No. 183

super, sprue, purse

Middleton Double-Crostic No. 213

Robert W. Greene: The Sting Man

Abscam...was a massive confidence game. The United States Government was running the swindle and the marks were streetwise hoodlums and public officials. All of them had survived by being careful and it took an extraordinarily gifted swindler to catch them.

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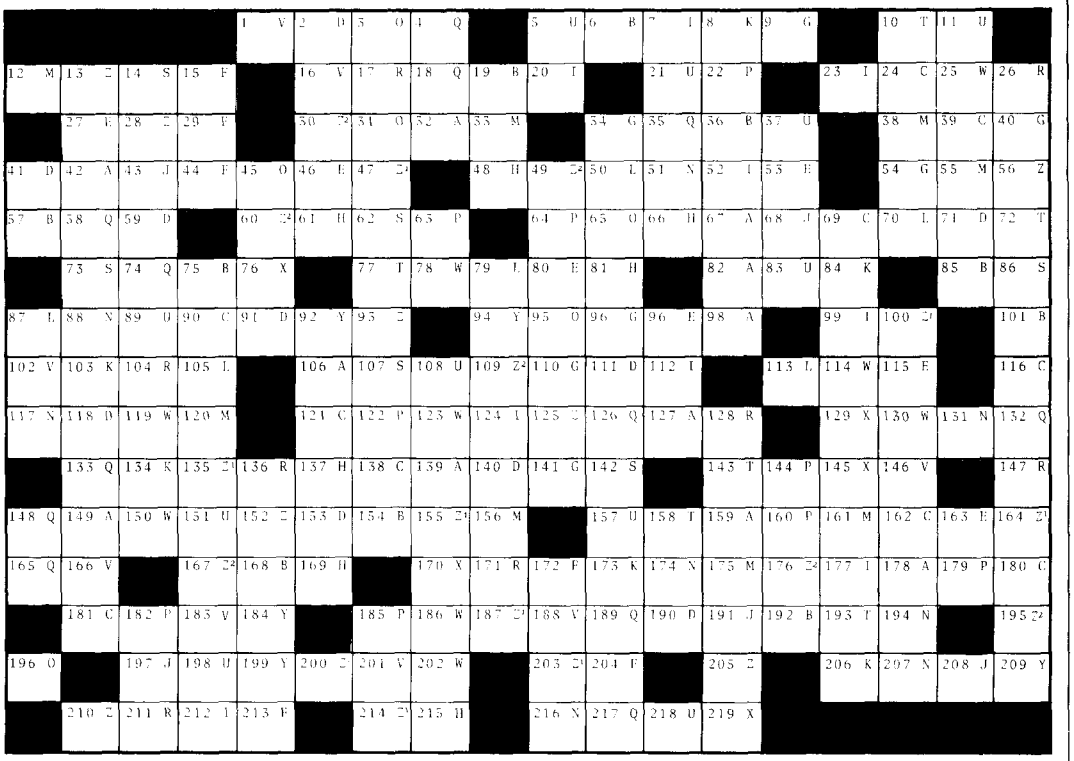
Instructions:
If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle. Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes.
The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If there is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may carry over to the line below.
The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.
You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.



Middleton Double-Crostic No. 214

CLUES	WORDS
A. Gorky play (2 wds. after the)	32 42 82 98 106 159 178 67 127 139 149
B. Devotee, fan	154 168 192 6 19 36 57 75 85 101
C. Sec, half a mo	181 24 39 116 121 138 162 180 69 90
D. (Of a disorder) caused by a physician or surgeon	91 118 153 190 2 59 71 111 140 41
E. Turned aside	53 27 46 80 97 115 163
F. Spread for drying	204 213 15 29 44 172
G. Fling, wingding	54 96 34 110 141 9 40
H. A series of adventurous wanderings	61 169 215 48 66 81 137
I. Made less severe	212 7 20 99 112 124 23 52 177
J. Echion's wife who, in a bacchanalian frenzy, tore her son to pieces	191 197 208 43 68
K. Worcester and Gloucester's river in England	84 103 134 173 206 8
L. Valor, pluck	87 105 113 70 50 79
M. Commonplace	120 161 175 12 33 38 55 156
N. Causes to grow or expand	194 207 51 88 117 131 174 216
O. Ungovernable	3 31 45 65 95 196
P. Picking out	64 122 144 182 185 22 160 179 63
Q. Leigh Hunt poem (3 wds.)	126 148 18 35 189 217 58 165 4 74 133 132
R. Wandering; divergent	211 17 128 136 104 147 171 26
S. Chewy confection containing almonds or other nuts	62 86 107 142 14 73
T. Mechanism for temporarily keeping one part in a certain position relative to that of another	72 193 10 143 158 77
U. Agreeable excitement	89 157 5 198 218 151 83 37 21 11 108
V. Blissful, beautiful	102 146 16 183 188 201 166 1
W. Device that records oceanic depths by sonic waves	186 119 78 150 202 130 25 123 114
X. Stubborn; severe	145 76 170 129 219
Y. Omphalos	92 94 199 184 209
Z. Former province, central France	205 152 56 13 125 93 210 28
Z¹ Lit up	200 155 187 164 214 203 100 135 47
Z² "Thy nose is as the tower of ____" (Song of Solomon 7:4)	60 49 195 167 109 30 176

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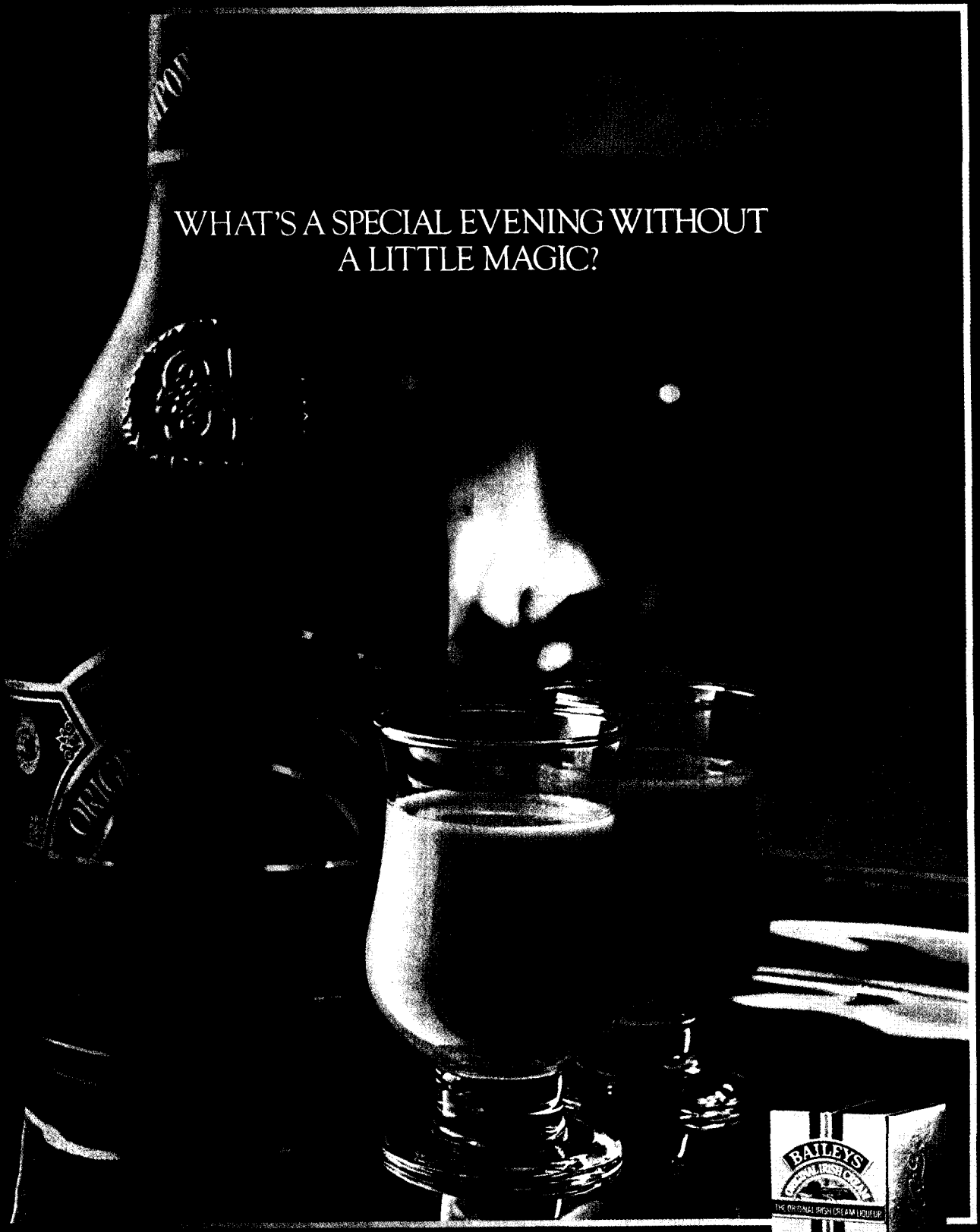
WHAT'S A SPECIAL EVENING WITHOUT A LITTLE MAGIC?



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Books

SR's choice of the best books of the year appears on page 75.

Fiction

The Age of Wonders, by Aharon Appelfeld (David R. Godine, 224 pp., $12.95). Israeli novelist Appelfeld evokes the cosmopolitan, intellectual, formalized life of pre-war Austria—especially the cultured, nervous life of its assimilated Jews—in a moving novel that exists at the distance of a dream.

Spring Moon, by Bette Bao Lord (Harper & Row, 480 pp., $14.95). This beautifully written first novel traces the history of a Chinese Mandarin family from 1892 until 1927, with an epilogue that updates the story to 1972.

Crystal Vision, by Gilbert Sorrentino (North Point Press, 320 pp., $15). Plotless but poignant, this novel contains a grab bag of stories that may be the result of an excess of nervous energy and the emptying of notebooks. But it is a remarkable achievement, by the author of *Mulligan Stew* and *Aberration of Starlight*.

Poppa John, by Larry Woiwode (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 204 pp., $10.95). This ambitious tale about a widely loved TV soap-opera character, whom the studio's top brass declares must die, is borne into the reader's mind like an oily dream, its hints and shadows too literary by half, yet at times profoundly inspired.

Red Dragon, by Thomas Harris (G.P. Putnam's Sons, 354 pp., $13.95). The nearly identical slayings and mutilations of two families in different states is the spur to this chilling, tautly written, and well-realized psychological thriller. Harris is the author of *Black Sunday*.

The Royal Game & Other Stories, by Stefan Zweig (Harmony Books, 256 pp., $12.95). Zweig—a wealthy Austrian Jew who committed suicide in 1942 after the Nazis destroyed his world—has been praised by the likes of Freud, Thomas Mann, and Richard Strauss. The five newly translated novellas included here are about love, passion, revenge, and madness, and are introduced by an appreciation from novelist John Fowles.

Nonfiction

Bismarck, by Edward Crankshaw (The Viking Press, 408 pp., $19.95). In this scrupulously detailed, eloquently written biography, the 19th-century master of Realpolitik emerges as a peculiarly fascinating kind of scoundrel.

Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald, by Matthew J. Bruccoli (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 433 pp., $25). Bruccoli gives the Fitzgerald myth flesh and dimension, as well as full-scale scholarly documentation. And the Fitzgerald dramatics—the brush of genius, the vortex of anguish—speak for themselves.

Waldo Emerson: A Biography, by Gay Wilson Allen (The Viking Press, 751 pp., $25). The first biography of Emerson in more than 30 years diligently portrays the private and the public man. It evinces a firm grasp of the social and political ferment of Emerson's time and offers vivid portraits of his contemporaries.

William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked, by Paul Mariani (McGraw-Hill, 912 pp., $22.95). Mariani's massive feat of research and synthesis succeeds in bringing to vivid life the mercurially cranky physician/poet from Rutherford, New Jersey, who became one of the guiding spirits of the modernist movement.

The Language of Clothes, by Alison Lurie (Random House, 238 pp., $20). Above all, this is a novelist's morphology of literary types in which clothing is wittily explored as the ultimate in the "telling" detail. Some of Lurie's pronouncements are questionable, but most of her observations are trenchant and astute.

Witches, by Erica Jong (Harry N. Abrams, 176 pp., $19.95 until December 31, 1981, $25 thereafter). For dreamers and poets and those who harbor "secret selves," *Witches* explores the evolution of the witch in history, art, and myth. Novelist Jong has written an imaginative and intelligent entertainment.

SR's Phoenix Code

- Outstanding
- Excellent
- Good
- Notable

Theater

Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music (Nederlander Theater, New York City). When Horne stops singing, her stage personality—bitter superstar who, deep down, is just a funky farm girl—can grate. But fortunately, she devotes nearly all the evening to song, and when she grabs hold of a tune, she stretches its rhythmic and emotional boundaries to stunning breadth.

The Pirates of Penzance (Minskoff Theater, New York City). Director Wilford Leach and music director William Eliott set an overall tone of intelligence and charm. This *Pirates* has been put together by contemporary Americans who love and respect the work but who will not try to mimic Victorian Englishmen or their descendants.

Cloud 9 (Theatre de Lys, New York City). Act I of this British play lampoons Victorian sexual hypocrisy in vaudeville style. Act II, performed more realistically, shows how liberated our society has become—and what a vacuum this liberation has created. The production is well acted, sensitively directed.

Film

Blood Wedding. Carlos Saura brings Lorca's classic work to the screen with breathtaking beauty and heart-stopping drama as a ballet choreographed by Antonio Gades and danced by him and his exquisite company of flamenco dancers. This is an extraordinary work, a standard-setting marriage of dance, drama, and film.

Montenegro. Yugoslavia's Dusan Makavejev (*W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*) offers us another delightful surreal and black comedy, this time in more conventional form and in English. The film, shot in Sweden, recounts the everyday fantasies of a mad American housewife (Susan Anspach), her prosaic Swedish husband (Erland Josephson), and even her venal shrink (Per Oscarsson).

Whose Life Is It Anyway? Based on Brian Clark's stage success, this suspenseful drama about the individual's right to die boasts a stunning performance by Richard Dreyfuss. A dynamic film that gets to the heart of living.

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Jane Austen in Manhattan. Producer Ismail Merchant, director James Ivory, and scenarist Ruth Prawer Jhabvala offer us a very Austenish comment on manners, morals, and methods in New York's theater culture. The story is a spirited duel between Robert Powell and Anne Baxter, as avant- and ancien-garde, vying for a Jane Austen playscript and the foundation grant to produce it.

Man of Iron. In this sequel to his 1976 *Man of Marble*, Andrzej Wajda traces, again in interview-and-flashback form, the story of Poland's solidarity movement, starting with the student reform movement of 1968 and coming to climax with the historic signing of the strike settlement in August 1980. Although his protagonist is fictional, Wajda has, in effect, filmed history in the making with a cast of thousands.

Records

Weill: Songs (Nonesuch Digital D-79019*, $11.98). This collection of unknown songs by Kurt Weill, in knock-out performances by soprano Teresa Stratas, is the most arresting release of 1981. Lotte Lenya, Weill's widow, calls Stratas the greatest living singer of her husband's music. Stratas is a completely unbuttoned performer with the important issues on her mind and heartbreak in her voice.

Beethoven: Sonatas (Deutsche Grammophon 2531300*, $10.98). It would be hard to imagine more buoyant, characterful performances of the Kreutzer and Spring sonatas than these by 85-year-old pianist Wilhelm Kempff and violinist Yehudi Menuhin, 20 years his junior. Age has revealed something about youth to them that they share with us here.

Handel: Water Music (Delos Digital DMS 3010, $17.98). Perhaps the best of ex-trumpeter Gerard Schwarz's recordings with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, this disc is a model of how to play Handel on modern instruments—with bounce and grace, warm tone, and transparent textures. Delos is very particular about digital recording, and its superior product enhances these qualities.

Dvořak: Chamber music. Nonesuch has recently released two original and captivating Dvořak records: The Raphael Trio does well by the F-minor trio for violin, cello, and piano (H-71397*, $5.98); and the Sequoia String Quartet, aided by bassist Julius Levine, does brilliantly by the G-major quintet (Digital D-79012*, $11.98). The Sequoia is a group to watch. The Nocturne intermezzo from the quintet is a piece to play again and again.

Weber: Der Freischütz (3-London OSA-13136*, $32.94). This early romantic opera is a Caspar David Friedrich moonscape come to life, and conductor Rafael Kubelik gives it a beautifully paced, evocative reading, never going for obvious effects or melodrama. The Bavarian Radio Orchestra and Chorus sounds like a world-class ensemble. The cast—Helen Donath, René Kollo, Peter Meven—is led by soprano Hildegard Behrens's luminous, flesh-and-blood Agathe.

*cassette avilable

Art

Soundings (Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase, New York). An ambitious attempt to document the varied, often inspired, uses to which visual artists have put sound-making devices in the decades since 1900. Marcel Duchamp, Jean Tinguely, and John Cage represent the old guard. Younger figures include Max Neuhaus, Laurie Anderson, and Harry Bertoia. A major survey of an aspect of the avant-garde that usually gets lost between the standard categories. (Through December 23.)

Costakis Collection of Russian Avant-Garde Art (The Guggenheim Museum, New York City). Nearly 300 works by 40 of the artists who attempted to join radical aesthetics with radical politics at the time of the Russian Revolution. Malevich, Rodchenko, and Tatlin are known in the West, but most of the painters and sculptors included here are not. A revealing look at an episode of modernism long hidden from view. (Through January 3.)

The Magician of Venice, Mariano Fortuny, 1871-1949 (The Art Institute of Chicago). A fashion designer who was considered a major artist by his admirers, Fortuny is the subject of a new burst of attention from critics and historians who have learned to take the decorative arts seriously. Nostalgia for faded glamour is at work here, as well as a serious appreciation of the inventiveness and high style of this *fin de siècle* figure. The full range of his output is sampled, with more than 100 gowns, jackets, and painted fabric panels on display. (Through January 3.)

Manifestations of Shiva (The Seattle Art Museum). Nearly 200 paintings and sculptures reveal the seemingly endless faces of Shiva, the destroyer—and regenerator—who occupies a central place in the Hindu pantheon. Drawn from collections in Asia, Europe, and North America, the exhibition spans a period of two millennia. (Through January 31.)

August Sander: Photographs of an Epoch, 1904-1959 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). The German documentary photographer August Sander worked from the early 1900s to the 1940s on a project he called "Man of the Twentieth Century." All his subjects were countrymen, yet despite this limitation he recorded an extraordinary range of humanity. One hundred-fifty portraits from the series have been selected for this show. (Through January 24.)

Dance

Merce Cunningham: Dance and the Camera (Smithsonian Museum, Washington D.C.). There will be three events in this series: "Video Retrospective," a showing of Cunningham video work (December 5); "Film Retrospective and Seminar," an appreciation of Cunningham's collaborations with composers and painters conducted by David Vaughan (December 6); "Performance," in which Cunningham presents and discusses new film dances (December 7). Check with the Smithsonian for time and place.

The American Ballet Theatre (Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington D.C.). The troupe's annual winter season in the nation's capital includes not only repertory but also its famous version of *The Nutcracker*, this one choreographed by the company's artistic director and premier danseur, Mikhail Baryshnikov. Engagement opens December 8; *Nutcracker* plays for two weeks starting December 21.

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